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ANGLING

IN -

SALT WATER:

A PRACTICAL WORK ON

SEA FISHING WITH ROD AND LINE,

FROM THE SHORE, PIERS, JETTIES, ROCKS, AND FROM BOATS;

Together with Some Account of Hand-Lining.



- By JOHN BICKERDYKE, M

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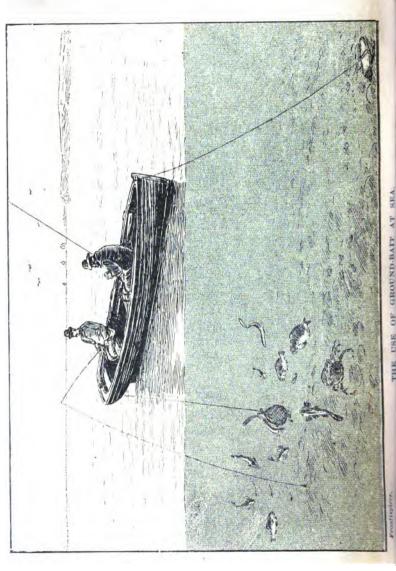
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Angling in Salt Water:

A PRACTICAL WORK ON FISHING WITH ROD AND LINE IN
THE SEA, FROM THE SHORE, PIERS, JETTIES, ROCKS,
AND FROM BOATS, TOGETHER WITH SOME
ACCOUNT OF HAND-LINING.

BT

JOHN BICKERDYKE, prend.

Charles H. Cook

ILLUSTRATED WITH OVER 50 ENGRAVINGS.

LONDON:

L. UPCOTT GILL, 170, STRAND, W.C.
1887.

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LONDON:
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PREFACE.

only three, so far as I know, deal with the capture of fish in the sea; and in none of these is angling with rod and line exhaustively considered. The subject of this little work is sea fishing—or, rather, sea angling—for pleasure, as opposed to sea fishing for profit; and, apart from any value attaching to the information given, if my endeavours have the effect of sending more anglers to the sea, and relieving the strain on our overfished rivers and lakes, I shall not have written in vain.

The first concern of sea fishermen is a big haul, and sport is not even a second consideration, for it never enters into their minds. It has thus come about that many fresh-water anglers, who know only of the hand-lines, long-lines, trawls, and other contrivances used by fishermen, are inclined to regard the sea as the last place to visit for sport. This book will, I hope, show that angling of a superior kind is to be obtained in the sea, and possibly in a few years the very limited number of persons who angle in salt water may be considerably increased.

When angling in fresh water became popular, it was the anglers who took the lead in promoting those valuable measures respecting river pollution and fish preservation which have saved many of our inland fisheries from destruction. It is generally believed that certain fisheries on the

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British coasts run the risk of extinction owing to the reckless manner in which they are worked. The poorer classes of fishermen, who most feel the decrease in the numbers of fish, have no influence, and the more wealthy netsmen and owners of steam trawlers—men of limited vision—do not seem inclined to assist in clipping their own wings. I venture to say that if sea angling comes into general favour, the followers of the contemplative man's recreation will again be foremost with sound reasons in urging upon the Government the necessity of properly protecting our sea fisheries.

To add to the usefulness of this volume, I have included a few remarks on hand-lining—a method which, under certain circumstances, must be adopted.

I have been, to a certain extent, at a disadvantage undertaking a work of this character, for, there being no books on sea fishing with rod and line, I cannot include the experiences of other writers with my own-a proceeding which, while taking away from the originality of "Angling in Salt Water," would undoubtedly have rendered it more valuable to the reader, two or more heads being better than one. However, my own experiences have been varied, and I have had the great advantage of reading occasional letters from sea anglers in the columns of the Field, Land and Water, the Fishing Gazette, Fishing, and in other papers, which have considerably added to my knowledge. From Mr. Wilcocks' very valuable work, "The Sea Fisherman," I have also learnt much concerning the habits of fish, and the methods used by professional fishermen. If anglers take as kindly to angling in salt water as I believe they will, I hope at some future time to revise and enlarge this volume; and I need hardly say that any suggestions sent me by my readers will be received with much gratitude, and be very thoughtfully considered.

J.B.

July, 1887.

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ANGLING IN SALT WATER.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

Fishing for Pleasure and Profit—Advantages of Fine Tackle— A Cure for the Supercilious Fresh-water Angler—Angling Sometimes out of the Question.

nature of a dissertation on the origin of angling would be out of place, so I will merely ask the reader to believe me when I say that the sport of angling is as ancient as it is delightful. Not until comparatively recent years, however, has fishing with rod and line in salt water come much into vogue, and even now the number of anglers who pursue that branch of the sport is extremely limited. In salt water, fish are certainly less difficult to catch than in fresh; but for all that, there is a right and wrong way to catch them, and he who takes the latter path had best remain at home.

Between fishing for pleasure and fishing for profit there are many points of difference. In fishing for profit, the one thing aimed at is a great catch—a veritable battue of fish. Elaborate apparatus, miles of nets and lines, danger, toil, hardship, ay, even loss of life—all are involved in bringing to market the many thousand tons of wholesome food which kindly Nature has placed within our reach. With the angler it is different:

he follows the recreation of the contemplative man only during the hours which he can spare from the time devoted to the more serious business of life. Angling books are written to make those hours pleasant ones.

Now as to tackle. It is a popular delusion that sea fish can be caught on anything. As the cunning trout is often -alas! too often-taken on the thick, hempen night-line of the poacher, so are sea fish caught in deep water, at night, by the fisherman, on the coarsest lines. But in the daytime, more especially in shallow water, moderately fine tackle becomes absolutely essential, and then it is that the angler has the great advantage. When the fish are biting fast at night, or, during the day, in the gloomy depths of the sea, the fisherman will bring into the boat three fish for every one caught by the angler, the simple reason being, that the fish can be hauled up faster on coarse tackle than on fine. The following little anecdote illustrates the advantages of fine tackle in the daytime. Self, friend, and gillie were about stepping into a boat on the shores of a sealoch in Scotland. I had a cane rod and a paternoster, and advised my friend to bring the same; but, the gillie laughing at my tackle, and exclaiming that sea fish were never caught on a rod, he decided to fish with hand-lines provided by the man. I stuck to my paternoster, and he used two hand-lines, the gillie holding a third. The result of the afternoon's fishing was a fair take of fish, two-thirds of which fell to the paternoster, the remaining third to the three hand-lines. It was not a matter of superior skill, but merely of gut tackle as opposed to hempen hand-lines. Not only had I most sport, but it was certainly far more enjoyable playing the fish, and lifting them into the boat in a landing-net, than hauling up several fathoms of wet line, and dragging the fish on board willy nilly.

The angler should not consider sea fish as unworthy his notice by reason of the ease with which they are sometimes to be caught. If he has that idea, let him spend a week attempting to catch grey mullet. He will be completely cured at the end of that time.

Lest I should be taken to advise that fine tackle should always be used for sea fish, I may as well say here that there are occasions when, owing to the depth of water and strength of tide, strong tackle and very heavy leads become necessary, no forms of which can be better, under the circumstances, than those used by the professional fisherman. An excellent and exhaustive work on sea fishing exists in Mr. Wilcocks' "Sea Fisherman." It should be read by everyone, whether sea fisherman or angler in salt water.

These few remarks are, I think, sufficient introduction. What follows is purely of a practical nature, unexpanded by anything the least in the nature of padding, and will, I hope, prove acceptable to the reader, to whom, Good Sport!

CHAPTER II.

TACKLE.

A Useful Outfit—General Rod—Rings and Fittings—Fly Rod
—Lines—Reels and Winches—Gaff-hook—Landing-net—
Hooks—The Paternoster—Gut—Gimp—Knots—Modifications
of the Paternoster—the Sea Leger—Heavy and Light Float
Tackle—Spinning, Trailing, Whiffing and Railing Tackle
—Sundries.

HE tackle required by the angler in salt water depends, of course, on the nature of the locality, and the fish he proposes to catch. If the available fishing is in a shallow harbour, heavy leads and long, coarse lines will, of course, not be required; while, on the other hand, if the fishing is from a boat, where the water is very deep, and the tide runs strongly, light paternoster tackle may be found quite useless. Before visiting a strange place, it is as well to write to one of the local hotel-keepers or fishmongers, and ask him for information concerning the fishing from the shore, pier-head, quay, or off the coast, as the case may be. Such informants, being interested in attracting visitors, are sometimes apt to exaggerate a little, so that the information gained is not always so reliable as could be wished; but having made due allowance for this, sufficient knowledge of the place will usually be obtained to give a fair idea of the tackle required.

Generally speaking, a long, stout, cane rod, a large winch, 100 vards of plaited, tanned, hemp line, a hank of medium and one of very stout salmon gut, a few yards of fine Patent Gimp, eved hooks of various sizes, leads of different weights, pierced swan-shot, two floats-light and heavy - artificial spinning baits, and spinning traces, form an outfit with which sea fish may be caught all round the shores of the United Kingdom. Now and again exceptional tackle is necessary; and where the necessity arises, the tackle to be used will be found described in other portions of this work. In this chapter I shall only deal with the tackle which is generally required. When, as occasionally happens, owing to the force and depth of the water, or to other reasons, there is no alternative but to fish after the manner of professional fishermen, which, as I have pointed out, partakes rather of the nature of business than of pleasure or sport, the necessary apparatus can nearly always be obtained from the local dealers. Even then some modification of their tackle in the direction of fineness near the hook is usually advisable. I have frequently heard fishermen urge amateurs to fish from the shore, piers, and in shallow water generally, with tackle that the professionals use in deep-sea fishing. They doubtless do this with the best intentions, but as they rarely or never fish from pier-heads and the like themselves, they are usually altogether ignorant of the best means of taking fish from such places. An angler fishing for whiting pout, we will say, from Brighton Pier, with a fine gut paternoster, will certainly catch five fish to every one caught on the ordinary sea fisherman's hand-lines.

Rods.—I will now describe two very useful rods, the first for general fishing, the second for fly fishing, but which, with a short top, may be used for any other purpose. If the angler is not likely to do any fly fishing, the second rod may be omitted; while if he wishes to fly-fish, and expense is a consideration, he can do without the first-named rod, and use his fly rod for all purposes. It may be advisable to say that anglers who have the necessary rods for fishing in fresh water, need buy little or nothing specially for use in the sea. The general rod should be in three joints. It is

best made of East Indian cane, with two tops of well-seasoned greenheart, and, when put up with the longest top, should measure at least 15ft. An extra butt, 4ft. long, bringing the rod to 19ft. in length, will be found occasionally very useful. The angler, of course, does not want to use a heavy, long rod, unless it is really necessary, but to be without one when it is wanted is a great nuisance. For boat work, a short rod is most handy; but from the shore a long rod is advisable. The second top should be only a foot in length, and made very strong. It is for use when



FIG. 1. SNAKE-SHAPED BOD RING.

heavy leads are necessary, as in spinning, or whiffing for big fish, such as pollack and bass, and it reduces the rod to 11ft. in length. There will, of course, be winch

fittings on both butts. The best are those designed by Herr Weeger, and bearing his name. They are strong, and take any sized winch. The very best rings for all kinds of rods are what are called snake-shaped rings. They are illustrated

in Fig. 1. The line runs through them more easily than through any other pattern made, and never twists round them—a very important consideration. The ring I believe to be the best for the top of the rod is one I designed some years ago, and which is commonly known as the "Bickerdyke" rod top ring (Fig. 2). It works on pivots, and decreases friction by adapting itself to whatever angle the line makes with the rod. I have also found that with this ring the line



Fig. 2. "BICKERDYKE" ROD TOP BING.

rarely fouls the top of the rod, for, should it get round it, the ring at once goes flat with the rod, and the line slides off. At the most, a little jerk of the rod is all that is necessary to set it free. There is, sometimes, an interior ring (not shown in the illustration), which is capable of being shifted round when any part gets a little worn. This is

usually omitted in small rings. It is, as a rule, of steel, but should be of ivory for sea fishing. I may, perhaps, be prejudiced in favour of my own invention, but I should not venture to recommend it here had it not received the praises of a goodly number of accomplished anglers. Both the snake rings and the top ring should be of considerable size—larger, if anything, than are used on pike rods. The fly rod should be a salmon or grilse rod, about 16ft. long, made of greenheart or hickory—the former for preference. If the angler is very strong, and can wield a longer and heavier weapon, by all means let him obtain one, for he will be able to make a very long cast with it. On the other hand, if he feels a rod of 16ft. too much for his strength, he should be content with one of 14ft. The fly rod should have an extra top, only 6in. long, for use in general fishing. It is not a bad plan, when paternostering or float fishing, to have out a second and stronger line, with leger tackle, baited for big fish. The fly rod with the short top can be used for this line. The winch fittings and rings of the fly rod should be those already described. The joints of fly rods are sometimes spliced together, and sometimes fastened with ferrules. The latter method is the most convenient, but the spliced rods cast best, and I rather prefer them. The splicing, however, takes time, has to be carefully done, and is an undoubted bother. Against this, it may be said that ferrules get loose, and crack; and if a rod breaks, it is usually at the ferrule. If the fly rod alone is purchased, and it is used for general fishing, an extra butt may be added to increase the length of the rod when desirable. In this case, the lower end of the ordinary butt has to be fitted with a ferrule, as if it were a middle joint. Mr. Senior, the angling editor of the *Field*, has, I understand, suggested a telescope butt for fly rods, which adds an extra 2ft. on to any rod when it is required. I have not seen the invention, but should think that it would probably be useful in lieu of an extra butt on the rod I have described. There are various methods of fastening the joints of ferruled rods together, but in the best rods now made no fastenings are necessary, the ferrules fitting one another so truly that they never cast out. They are, I believe, ground in to one another, and fit as closely as the plugs in gas taps. It is well to vaseline or soap these ferrules before putting the rod together, or they may stick too fast. I have a fly rod made on this principle, by Messrs. Warner & Sons, of Redditch, which I put to the severe test of a month's fishing without once taking it to pieces. At the end of that time the joints were as tight as when first put together. I have, therefore, some reason to believe that, in a few years, the various contrivances for fastening together the joints of fly rods will fall into disuse. The same manufacturers are makers of the Hi Regan landing-net, and patent rod top ring, referred to on pages 6 and 11 respectively.

Lines.—Where expense is no object, a first-class eight-plait, pure silk line, carefully dressed with linseed oil (not boiled oil), is the very best line obtainable. For fly fishing it should be tapered, and of the substance used in salmon fishing. Probably the cheapest effective fly line made is the cable-laid cotton line (No. 2) of the Manchester Cotton Twine Company. The Company more than doubles the price of the line if dressed, so that a good many persons prefer to dress it themselves, at the cost of a few pence, with a mixture of coal tar and paraffin (in the proportion of three to one). These lines are not tapered. The Manchester Company make very superior cotton hand-lines. For general bottom fishing and spinning a medium jack line answers very well. Where expense is an object, I can recommend the tanned eightplait hemp lines sold by nearly all tackle makers. had one of these lines for five years, and it still shows no signs of weakness; but I am very careful with my lines, drying them after use, and about once a week, when at the seaside, washing them in fresh water. There is not the slightest objection to the line for fly fishing being twisted; indeed, I have cast with mere twisted lines, which were admirable in every respect. It is surprising that they are not in general use, as they are considerably stronger than plaited lines. Anglers who can use Nottingham tackle will find a twisted pure silk line, such as is used on the Trent, very useful for

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float fishing and paternostering, but very bad for spinning. If a fairly, fine twisted line is used, it should always be run directly on or off the reel, and never allowed to lie in coils on the ground, or it will tangle. Twisted lines, except those intended for Nottingham fishing, which cannot be too soft, are all the better for being dressed.

If hand-lines are required, they can be purchased at the seaside from the dealers who supply the professional fishermen. The best are made of twisted horsehair, the elasticity of which is very valuable when large fish have to be played with the hand. Next to these are the ordinary hemp cords, tanned, or dressed with a mixture of coal tar and turpentine (for the latter I should substitute paraffin). Hand-lines commence at about the thickness of a penny penholder, or a little less. For drift-line fishing, light leads are strung on them, at distances of two fathoms. A hundred yards is not too great a length for any kind of line used in sea fishing.

The Reel, or Winch.—This must of a necessity be large, as it has to hold many yards of line. The simplest, strongest,



Fig. 3. Nottingham Reel with Movable Check and Improved Guard.

and perhaps the best of all winches, is a plain—or with a slight check—brass one; but anglers who know how to use Nottingham reels will give them the preference. These latter are now made with a check, which can be put on or off—a very great convenience. The one fault with Nottingham reels is that the line,

particularly if a stiff-dressed one, sometimes uncoils itself and gets twisted round them. I have remedied this by fixing a brass wire on the circumference, in the manner shown in Fig. 3. If this fitting was more generally known, I believe no Nottingham winches would be made without it. The advantages of the Nottingham reels are the ease with which they run, which enables tackle of any kind to be cast out a long distance, the line running off the reel as the tackle passes through the air; the check of almost any degree of strength which can be put on them, by pressing the little finger of the right hand on the edge of the reel; and particularly the rapidity with which they take up the line, owing to the large diameter of the barrel on which the line is wound. One turn of a Nottingham reel about equals two of an ordinary winch, so that the advantage of a multiplier is gained without the intricate mechanism, which is so objectionable. The reel shown in Fig. 3 is a great favourite of mine, and I use it for all purposes. It has a check which can be taken on or off; the line cannot uncoil, by reason of the wire guard; and it is as good as a multiplier. There are reels made, a combination of the ordinary winch and the Nottingham reel. I do not like them, because, as a rule, they are so made that there is no rim on which the little finger can be placed as a check. If more line has been bought than will go easily on the reel, either cut some of it off, or buy a larger reel, which will take all the line and ten vards more if necessary.

Gaff-Hook and Landing Net.—Before coming to the lower—but not inferior—tackle, that round and about the bait, some reference should be made to gaff-hooks and landing-nets, which, with rods, reels, and lines, constitute what I may term the "standing rigging" of the angler. The gaff-hook should be a reliable instrument. The ordinary thing sold in tackle shops screws into a handle, and, this screw becoming loose as soon as the socket rusts a little, the arrangement is very unsatisfactory. Something better, and so simple that it may have been invented by the father of all fishermen, is a long, flat-shanked hook, with the end of shank brought to a fine point, and turned outwards as shown in

Fig. 4. The end of the shank is hammered into a good ash

stick, and a lashing put round it (Fig. 5). It makes the most satisfactory gaff with which I am acquainted, and any one who can splice a rod can put this gaff on its handle in three or four minutes. When on fishing excursions I usually bind the hook to the stick, and keep it there. The binding—a piece of hemp, old fishing line, in fact anything that comes first which is strong and not too thick—should be waxed, and, if in-



Fig. 4. Gaff-hook.

tended for a permanency, is all the better for a coat of paint, or the tar and turpentine mixture used for dressing lines. The point of the gaff should be kept very sharp, by means of an occasional file, and it is as well to stick it in a wine-cork when not in use. The best gaffs are now made with bayonet-shaped points, an idea originated by Dr-Brunton, a well-known writer on angling.

Some of the foregoing remarks apply to landing-nets; for the screw arrangement by which they are ordinarily fixed into their heads either rusts or wears loose, particularly under the influence of salt water, in an incredibly short space of time. A great improvement on the screw was a square head fixed into a square socket, and held in place by a spring-catch, introduced some years ago. It is, however, unsuited for sea work, as the spring rusts. A net known as the Hi Regan* has the best form of screw

Fig. 5. Gapf-hook on Handle.

^{*} Captain Dunne ("Hi Regan") invented this screw, and I must take the credit—or discredit, as the case may be—of the fastening at the top of the bow.—J.B.

I know. It is divided into two parts, which the natural spring in the bow of the net has a tendency to keep open, the result being that the screw fills out, and keeps tight, even in a well-worn socket. The Hi Regan net folds up for packing. As the sides are of highly tempered steel, some other metal would be desirable for sea work—phosphorbronze, for instance. A capital net is made altogether of



Fig. 6. Galvanised Iron Landing-net Ring.

wood, or wood and whalebone. It is light and very durable. The bow is formed of a strip of well-seasoned ash, steamed and bent into shape. This is bound on to a handle. A mere ring of galvanised iron (Fig. 6), with ends flattened and turned downwards, bound into a handle, answers every purpose. The net itself should be of large mesh, and either tanned or dressed. The object of the dressing is not so much to preserve the net as to render it stiff, so that hooks will not

entangle in it. With an ordinary soft, small-meshed net, a big fish, in his struggles for freedom, will sometimes mix up the hooks and net into a tangle, which causes valuable time to be lost. Fish often feed in an irregular kind of manner, taking any kind of bait ravenously for half-an-hour, and then disdaining the choicest morsels for the two hours following. It follows, therefore, that the angler who is not prepared to make the most of his opportunities—to make hay while the sun shines—to catch the fish while they are feeding—will never fill his creel.

Hooks.—Professional sea-fishermen generally tie a piece of hemp snooding round the shanks of their hooks, the tops of which are flattened to prevent the knot slipping off. This is about as primitive and awkward a method as could well be imagined.

In the deep-sea cod fisheries, hooks are sometimes used which are more sensibly shaped. The end of the shank is turned round to form an eye, and into this eye the snooding

is fastened. Of late years, eyed hooks, as they are called, have become greatly in use in fresh water, and they, undoubtedly, have many advantages. The arguments proand con have been discussed at so much length in the angling press, that I need not enter into them here; but I will unhesitatingly say that for the angler in salt waterthey are the most useful kind of hooks which can be obtained.

In bass and pollack fishing, it is of the first importance to have good hooks, and it is the worst possible economy to buy cheap ones, which are certain to be badly tempered. A hook should be neither over-tempered or brittle, causing it to snap when subjected to a heavy strain, nor undertempered or soft, opening when the point is pulled against the mouth of a fish. With so many different pattern hooks to select from, it is a little difficult to say which is the best.

Sea fish take the bait eagerly as a rule, and the exact shape of the bend is not of very great importance, provided the hook is not radically bad. For fly fishing in salt water, I think the Sproat hook as good a one as can be made: it may not hook so well as some other bends, which is not of the same importance with bass as with trout, but it holds well-a very important point in bass fishing. For the smaller fish, a Round or Kendal Bend hook answers admirably. Hooks are made with the points slightly twisted to one side. They do very well for fly fishing or whiffing, but I do not like them for ground fishing. Rather a longer shank can be used in the sea than in fresh water, which is a decided advantage, as the longer the shank the greater is the penetrating power possessed by the hooks. Hooks to be avoided are those with points bending outwards away from the shank; these scratch more fish than they hook. A large barb is not necessary. A sharp point is very essential; this depends in the first instance on the hookmaker, afterwards on the angler, who should sharpen up the point occasionally with a needle or watchmaker's file. In sea fishing it is very desirable to have hooks made of rather stouter wire than

is usual in fresh-water angling. Some of the bends of hooks are illustrated in Fig. 7. According to the drawing, the Limerick hook has the point turned out in the

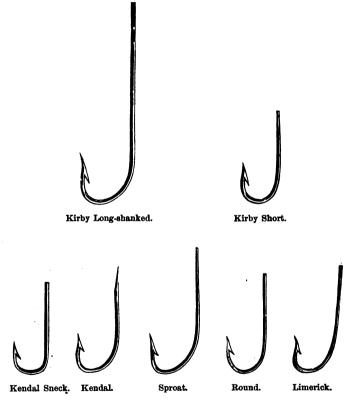


FIG. 7. VARIOUS BENDS OF HOOKS.

objectionable manner I have commented upon. If this point were turned inwards a little, so as to be parallel with the shank, the hook at once becomes a very good one. The

best method I know of fastening gut to eyed hooks, is that shown in Fig. 8, invented by Major Turle. The end of the gut, after being well moistened, is first put through the eye

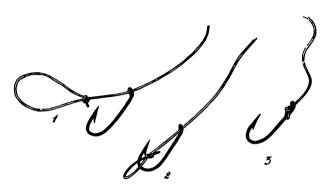


FIG. 8. THE TURLE KNOT.

on the side remote from the point, a slip-knot or noose is then made (1), the hook passed through it (2), and the gut pulled tight (3). In Fig. 9 is shown a simple knot which has

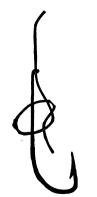
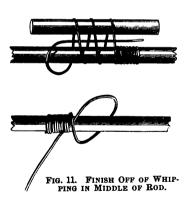


FIG. 9. A NEW KNOT.

been well spoken of. My experience tells me that it is not altogether safe, unless the eye of the hook fits the gut closely. Gut is fastened to hooks without eyes by means of waxed silk or thread lashed round the end of gut and the shank. The method of fastening off the silk is shown in Fig. 10. Having bound on the silk as far as the end of the gut, the end of the silk is laid along the shank, and two more turns of the binding taken with the loop of silk. At each turn the hook

passes through the loop. Each turn of the silk also passes over the end of the silk laid along the shank, which should now be pulled tight. This is most difficult to describe on paper, but will, I hope, be understood by the engraving (Fig. 10). It is the usual method of fastening off bindings on hooks, or near the ends of rods, &c. Where a piece of binding has to be done in the middle of a rod. the same fastening is made in a different manner (see Fig. 11). A round piece of wood, such as a penholder (the finger will do), is laid along the thing bound, and three turns taken with the silk



know it. The best way of fastening gimp to a conger or hake hook, is to pass the end through the eye of the hook, and bind it on to the shank with strong, well-waxed thread.

A useful invention in connection with Fig. 12. SLICED HOOK.



Fig. 10. FINISH OFF OF WHIPPING.

over penholder and all. The end of the silk is passed under the three turns of silk, the penholder is then withdrawn, and the silk tightened. The process is extremely simple, and every angler should



hooks has been patented by Mr. Marston, the editor of the

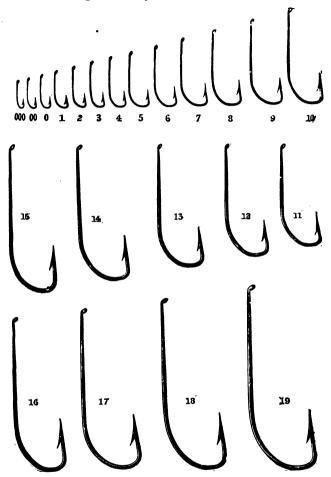


FIG. 13. HOOK SCALE.

Fishing Gazette. It is called the "sliced hook" (Fig. 12), and is intended to prevent the bait from slipping down the

shank. It answers its purpose well, and is, of course only used for those methods of fishing in which a portion of the bait is pushed up the shank of the hook, and is intended to remain there.

The variation in hook scales is the bête noir of writers on angling. Different towns have different scales, and different makers in those towns number their hooks in different ways, and sometimes vary their own nominal sizes. The only thing I can do is to place before my readers a hook scale (Fig. 13), and let it be an understood thing that when I refer to certain sizes of hooks by a number, I refer to the scale in this book. The bend of hook shown is a very good one. It is known as the Pennell-Limerick, and is made by Messrs. Bartleet and Sons, of Redditch. Hooks of that kind are numbered according to the scale given. I forbear to enter into the turn-up or turn-down eye discussion, as I am perfectly convinced that for angling in salt water it matters little or nothing which are used. My preference is for those turned down.

On the subject of eyes there is, however, a good deal to be said—and sung too, might be remarked, only I refer solely to the eyes of hooks. The large majority of eyes are unnecessarily large and clumsy, and I must say that the only really satisfactory eyes I have seen are those on the Pennell-Limerick hooks made by Messrs. Bartleet and Sons, and on some hooks patented by Messrs. Warner and Sons. In the former, the wire is filed down at the end of the shank, and turned into a very small, neat eye. In the latter, the eye is made of a separate piece of fine wire carefully brazed on. These hooks are somewhat expensive, but the double grilse hooks, with the brazed eye, are first-rate for large bass flies.

The Paternoster: Gut, Gimp, and Knots.—The paternoster is by far the most valuable piece of tackle used by the angler in salt water. It consists of a length of gut, on the end of which is a leaden weight, and from which project three or more pieces of gut bearing the hooks. The weight of lead, thickness of gut, or gimp—for that also is used—position and size of the hooks, all vary according to circumstances, such as

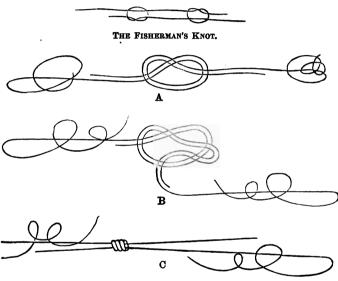
size of fish, depth of water, and nature of bottom. To make the

typical paternoster (Fig. 14), take a three-yard length of fairly stout gut, and, after well soaking it, make a one-and-a-half-inch loop at one end, and a smaller one at the other. On to the large loop fasten the lead after the method illustrated: then make a small loop in the gut five inches above the lead, fourteen inches higher a second loop, and fourteen inches higher still a third. The hooks-No. 9 and No. 10 are good general sizes-should be tied or bound on to pieces of gut about 6in. or 7in. long. The hooks are then fastened to the paternoster in the following simple manner: The loop on the paternoster is put through the loop of the gut on the hook; the hook is then put through the loop on the paternoster, and the thing Figs. 15 and 16 show is done. two methods of joining two lengths of gut together; Fig. 17 shows how to tie loops, and Fig. 18 a method of fastening gut tackle to the main line. The last-mentioned is known to sailors as the common bend, and is a very useful knot. The first method (Fig. 15) shown of tying the gut is most general; it explains itself: the knots are pulled tight, and then drawn up together. The second method (Fig. 16) makes a larger knot, but is much more

Fig. 14. THE PATERNOSTER.

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reliable, especially with fine gut. The ends of two strands are laid side by side, and, as if they were one strand, tied in a knot (A). Before being pulled tight, pass two of the ends again through the knot (B), and draw tight (c). In tying a loop at the end of a length of gut (Fig. 17), practically the same knot is used. Gut must always be either well soaked in cold water, or moistened in the mouth until it



Figs. 15 and 16. Two Methods of Joining Lengths of Gut.

is soft and can be tied without cracking. It is always more satisfactory to buy the gut in hanks and tie it, than to purchase the usual three-yard casts sold by tackle-makers, as the knots in these are not always reliable. Anything in the nature of a silk binding over the knots is quite unnecessary. I have so far only described the typical paternoster. Where large fish are expected, it may be made of the stoutest salmon gut, or gut less stout used double. I do not advocate twisted gut, for strands of it are apt to break without being noticed by the

angler, who, believing in the strength of his tackle, bears heavily on a big fish, and loses it. If double gut is used, the strands are

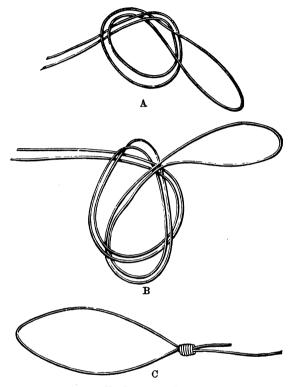


FIG. 17. LOOPS FOR COLLARS.



FIG. 18. ATTACHMENT OF LINES TO COLLARS.

best laid side by side, not twisted. As fine as salmon-gut, and as strong, is a new Patent Gimp which has been introduced

by Messrs. Warner and Sons, of Redditch. Inside the gimp, surrounded by silk, are one or more strands of fine wire, made of a patent composition which does not corrode, and possesses great tensile strength. I have tested some of this gimp, and find it bears a strain nearly double that borne by the best ordinary gimp of the same gauge. It probably has a great future before it for sea-fishing purposes, for the ordinary gimp is most unreliable stuff, and even when made with pure silk, which is not often, can never be depended upon after a few weeks' use. The Patent Gimp is first-rate for conger and hake

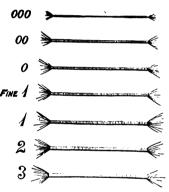


Fig. 19. GAUGES OF GIMP.

hooks. The gauges of gimp are shown in Fig. 19. No. 00 in the Patent Gimp will be found strong enough for fish up to 20lb.; for conger, No. 1 or No. 2 should be used. Gimp cannot be tied; the loops have to be made by turning the end round, and binding with silk or thread. As I have already said, the paternoster tackle admits of much modification. If the water is very deep, the lowest hook may be 18in. from the lead, and the other hooks

2ft. or more apart; if the bottom is very rocky and foul, the lowest hook must be put at such a height from the lead that it does not catch on the bottom; and, on the other hand, if the bottom is of sand or mud, and flat fish are expected, the lowest hook should be on 10in. or 12in. of gut, and be looped on close to the lead, so that the bait on that hook lies on the bottom. There is one disadvantage in making loops on the vertical gut portion of the paternoster; it, to a certain extent, fixes the places where the hooks are to be. A plan I often adopt myself, especially when the main portion of the paternoster is of salmon gut, is to make no loops, but to fasten on the hooks just above a knot, in the manner shown in Fig. 20. The hooks may then be put

at any height, according to circumstances. If the main gut line is served round with a little fine silk for a quarter of an

inch or less, to prevent friction with the hook link, so much the better. When fishing for conger, it is advisable to run brass swivels down the line, and fasten the hook links to them (Fig. 21). They prevent much entanglement.

The hooks on a paternoster need not, of course, be all of the same For instance, a large one, mounted on gimp, may be put on FASTENING HOOK LINKS ON TO the bottom loop, and be baited with half a pilchard for a conger. It is very convenient, when

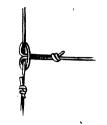


FIG. 20. METHOD OF

fishing strange water, concerning which no information is

Fig. 21. Hook mounted with Swivel on Paternoster. obtainable, to use four or five hooks and a variety of baits, which, in all probability, will soon enable the angler to see what fish are to be caught.

The Sea Leger.—This is a very useful piece of tackle for catching flat fish, and for casting out at the mouths of rivers for

A lead shaped as shown in Fig. 22 is strung on a foot of Patent Gimp. At each end of the gimp are loops, and on the binding of each loop a split swan-shot is fastened on to keep the lead from slipping off. Small glass beads, put on the gimp before the loops are made, will answer the same purpose. must fit the gimp tightly. Below the lead is 4ft. of gut-strong, medium, or fine, according to the fish expected-terminated by the hook. On to the other end of the gimp is looped a piece of salmon-gut, about 2ft. or 3ft. in length, and on this it is a good plan to have a second hook, which, unless the tackle is cast some considerable distance by the angler, will be a few inches from the bottom. It may be looped on to the line in the manner shown on page 23. The advantage of the lead sliding on a foot of gimp is that, immediately the bait is taken, the angler feels the pull of the fish, the line being drawn through the hole in the lead. When the lead is fixed the fish has, of course, to move it before the angler can perceive If the Patent Gimp cannot be oba bite. tained, copper or brass wire should be used, as ordinary gimp is most unreliable. As a rule, the leger is cast out and allowed to remain on the bottom; but from a boat or pier it may be used in a different manner, the lead being kept suspended at such a height that the bait is a few inches off the bottom. Fished in this manner, it will occasionally take fish when the paternoster fails; but the paternoster is the most generally useful tackle for the purpose.

Fig. 22. The SEA Leger. Float Tackle.—This I may divide into two kinds—heavy and light; the former for use

in the sea, the latter for harbour fishing. For fishing in the open sea, from piers, &c., the best form of float is one similar to those used by jack fishers-pear-shaped, with a hole drilled down the centre, through which the line passes. float is kept in its place by a long, hard-wood plug, which fits the hole. Beneath the float there is 5ft. or 6ft. of stout gut, terminated by a hook. Sinkers of some kind are necessary to keep the float erect; and as the exact weight varies, depending on the strength of the tide. I have devised a little arrangement. illustrated in Fig. 23, by which the weight of the sinker can be increased or decreased with great facility. take a piece of stout gut, 8in. in length, knot the two ends together, and put a few turns of waxed thread round it. as shown at B. I then thread pierced pistol bullets on to the loop A, the lower of which stops at the binding. B. I can obviously put as many or as few bullets on as may be necessary. Loop A is then fastened to the loop E on the gut, and the 2ft. of gut (F) bearing the hook looped on to the small loop, D. The arrangement is very simple. To add or to take away any of the bullets, the loops A and E have to be undone, which is a matter of no difficulty. The whole thing can be accomplished in a couple of minutes. Fig. 23. The top of the float should be

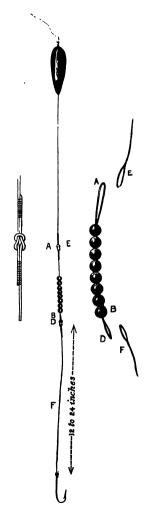


FIG. 23. HEAVY FLOAT TACKLE, WITH IMPROVED ARRANGE-MENT OF LEADS.

painted a bright red, so as to be visible among the waves; for the lower portion, any subdued tint will do. If the sea is quite calm, a smaller float may be used—for instance, the favourite one of Nottingham anglers, a large quill. If a fine Nottingham silk line is used with this float tackle, something much akin to the professional's drift-line fishing can be managed where the water is not more than ten fathoms deep. The boat is anchored in the tideway, as heavy leads as the float will bear are put on the line, the float is shifted as far from the lead as the water is deep—further if the tide is very strong—and an extra 2ft. of gut is added below the lead. The float is then let out for 20yds. or 30yds. or so, and checked. The depth has to be found by plumbing. The line must be fine, or it offers too great a surface to the water, and causes the bait to be lifted too far from the bottom.

Light float tackle should be very similar to that used for roach; any small float will do, those long and tapered being best. The gut line should be fine, and the sinkers may be either split shot, bitten or pinched on to the line a foot from the hook, or lead wire twisted round a needle, into a spiral form, and strung on to the gut. Float tackle for smelts should be of the finest gut, and so heavily weighted that only a small fraction of the float is visible above the water; the slightest bite can then be perceived. Small floats are usually attached to lines by the wire ring fixed on one end of the float, and a movable quill cap slid on the other. These quill caps are apt to cut the line, and split. The best caps are made of slices cut off small indiarubber tubing.

SPINNING, TRAILING, WHIFFING, AND BAILING TACKLE—ARTIFICIAL BAITS.

Professional sea fishermen rarely use spinning baits; a portion of, or a whole fish, dragged through the water, answering their purpose. Their method answers admirably for mackerel; but for bass and pollack a spinning bait has special attractions.

Spinning tackle consists of two parts: the flight—a length of gut or gimp bearing the hook or hooks; the trace—a length of gut or gimp bearing the sinker, and swivels to keep the line from twisting.

Spinning Flights.—Any small fish will do for spinning, and

the best tackle for the purpose (there are many good ones) is, I think, that known as the Chapman spinner. The hooks shown in Fig. 24 are not a good shape; the triangles advocated by Mr. Pennell, in which the point is straight, and does not turn out, are far better. The gimp on which the hooks are mounted should be white or silver, so as to make the bait more attractive; that above the bait, brass. Brass gimp is generally stained by fresh-water anglers, to take off some of the brightness, which scares jack: but in the sea the brightness goes off so quickly that the staining is not necessary. Some of the processes—for there are several—are apt to weaken ordinary gimp. The number of triangles shown are, except for a very large bait, too many. I never use more than two on one side and one on the other. The method of baiting is to insert the leaded spike in the mouth of the bait, right up to the fans: one hook of each of the triangles is then fastened into its side, and the affair is ready. If the lead is too heavy or thick, it can be easily pared down with a penknife. There should be a foot of fine Patent Gimp terminated with a loop, above the brass swivel. The Chapman spinner is so excellent a piece of spinning tackle that I need only mention one other, which can be made in a few minutes. It consists



FIG. 24. THE CHAPMAN SPINNER.

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simply of one or two triangles, attached to the end of a foot of gimp, the other end being looped. By means of a baiting-needle the loop of gimp is inserted at the vent of the bait, and drawn out at its mouth, and the triangle pulled up close to the belly. Nothing could be more simple—or effective, I might almost add with truth. Sand-eels and small eels are, as a rule, not spun, but merely trailed after the boat on two hooks, mounted one above the other, as shown in Fig. 25. They are, however, more deadly when spinning. A Chapman spinner without

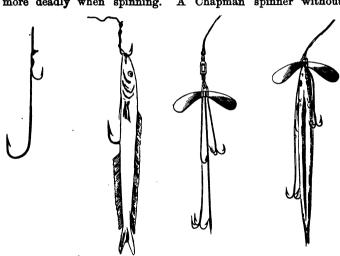


FIG. 25. SAND-REL ON ORDINARY
TRAILING TACKLE.

Fig. 26. Chapman Spinner for Sand-eels.

FIG. 27. SAND-REL ON CHAPMAN SPINNER.

lead, with small fans, and only two triangles, should be used as a flight for the purpose (Figs. 26 and 27). A lobworm is sometimes used as a spinning bait on the double hook tackle (Fig. 28). The worm is threaded up the big hook until its head comes up to the small hook, which, if eyed, is easily fastened, by a knot, in its place on the gut. The small hook is caught in the head of the worm, which then spins very well. Exactly similar tackle is used for trailing a small conger or freshwater eel. Half an eel, on a Chapman spinner, is a very

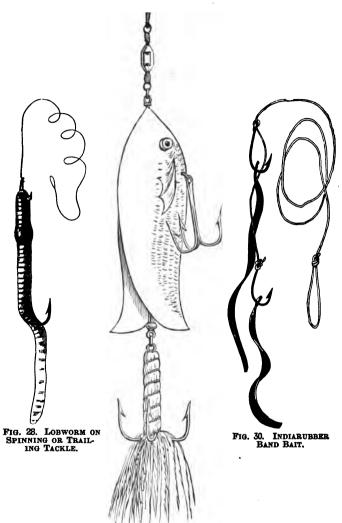


FIG. 29. GREGORY'S CLIPPER BAIT.

good arrangement, but the cut end, which comes next the fans, must be tied up tightly with twine. One bit of eel will sometimes last out a day's fishing.



Artificial Spinning Baits .- The best are: A spoon-bait each side of which is half gold and half silver; a red phantom minnow; Gregory's Clipper bait (Fig. 29); the red, artificial, indiarubber sand-eel, with or without Hearder's Baby spinner at the head: the Devon minnow: and last. but far from least, two red indiarubber bands (Fig. 30), cut, and caught by the ends on two hooks placed a few inches apart. These, when drawn through the water, present a most lifelike appearance. The tackle for them is made in a couple of minutes with two eyed hooks and a length of gut.

Traces.—The trace is a very important portion of the spinning tackle, for on it depends whether or not the line is twisted up and kinked, and the angler's life made a burden. The best manner of making a trace is illustrated in Fig. 31. At the lower end is a swivel of peculiar construction, to which the loop on the flight can be easily attached; then follows 3ft. 6in. of Patent Gimp or double salmon gut; then a pair of goodsized brass swivels; a boat-shaped lead, strung below the level of the line, the gimp through it being continued to form a loop 4in. long; and lastly, 2ft. more gimp or double salmon gut. The long loop above the lead is a little idea

of my own to enable additional leads to be looped on (see Figs. 32, 33). Any number of these can be added. In pollack fishing

especially, it is very necessary to be able to add to or lessen the amount of weight on the line, as, during the daytime, it is, as a rule, necessary to fish close to the bottom, and as the depth varies, so must, to a certain extent, the leads; but a great deal can be done by merely letting out or shortening line, operations which have the effect of sinking or raising the bait respectively. The angler should never purchase a trace in which the lead is not below the level of the line, and two swivels placed somewhere below the lead; next to it is the best position. This system of weighting a trace to prevent the line twisting has been used by sea fishermen for many years, but the idea was elaborated by the late Francis Francis, and more recently by Mr. Cholmondeley Pennell, for angling in fresh water. trace is intended for casting out a spinning bait. When the bait is merely dragged behind the boat, it is as well to make the length of gimp below the lead 4ft., 5ft., or longer.

In whiffing or railing for mackerel a single hook is used, to which is caught, by one end,

a strip of mackerel skin. Two hooks and two strips of skin,



similar to the band bait (see page 29), can sometimes be used with advantage. The trace shown in Fig. 31 answers as well for mackerel as for other fish: but as some of my readers may wish to fish for mackerel from a vacht, whose fast sailing would render angling impossible, I give an illustration (Fig. 34) of one of the tackles used for the purpose on the The whole thing, except South coast. the lead, is made of hemp snooding, which, with the line, has to be strong enough to tow a 3lb, mackerel after a sailing vessel. One or more flies are sometimes added to the snooding. The leads vary in weight from 3lb. to 5lb. The distance from the junction with the line bearing the lead to the end hook should be from 2vds. to 5vds., according to the weight of the lead The line bearing the lead should be 2ft. or 3ft. long.

Sundry Tackle, &c.—Among the sundries, the "courge" (Fig. 35), a basket



Fig. 35. Courge.

for holding live sand-eels, stands first. It has long been used in the Channel Islands, and was introduced to our fishermen by Mr. Wilcocks. I believe they are to be obtained at Plymouth.

Fig. 34. Hand-line for Mackerel Railing. Failing these, a finely-woven basket may be tried; but the courge is specially shaped for towing after the boat.

Charts showing the depths of the sea, position of rocks, set of tides, &c., are very useful additions to the sea angler's ontfit.

A reel of silk, a reel of thread, and a piece of cobblers' wax in a square patch of leather, should be owned by everyone calling himself an angler.

The disgorger, used for getting hooks out of fish, is a very useful instrument. I once had one made with a corkscrew handle (Fig. 36), which was very effective with big fish. The

handle was leaded, and served to knock them on the head. The little things sold in the shops only answer for small frv. A needle or watchmaker's file. kept and used to sharpen up hooks and gaff, will often add, indirectly, to the number of fish taken.

The bait-box for rag and other worms may be simply a large gentle-box: but for boat work, where something larger can be carried, it should be of wood, half covered, so that the worms have a dark corner to lie in. It should be made watertight by means of pitch, and should be kept scrupulously clean. A piece of board about 2ft. by 1ft. is very handy in boats, to cut the fish baits on.

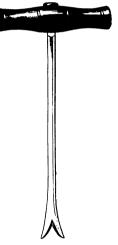


Fig. 36. Disgorger. The plummet illustrated in section in Fig. 37 is used for taking the depth and one other purpose. On its lower surface a hole (B) is scooped, in which tallow may be placed. The nature of the bottom is then easily discovered. The hook is put through the ring, and into a piece of cork (A) let into the lead. plummet should weigh about half a pound. For use with light float tackle, smaller plummets are necessary. are sold in all the tackle shops of the shape shown in Fig. 38. The larger plummet can be kept permanently attached to a light cord, on which the fathoms are marked off. In that case the cork is not required.

I have given some account of hand-lines at the end of Chapter IV., so that any description here is unnecessary, more especially as hand-line fishing takes me rather outside my subject.

Anglers who have the time should make up their own tackle. Obtain the best hooks, gut, swivels, &c., money can purchase, and from them make up the necessary forms of paternosters,

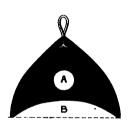


Fig. 37. Section of Plummet with Cavity for Tallow.



Fig. 38. Ordinary Lead Plummet.

legers, traces, &c. There is always a chance of a big fish when angling in salt water, and it is necessary to have very sound tackle. That purchased, except from a few of the first houses, is thoroughly unreliable, and even the made-up tackle of the best houses comes to pieces after a very little use. As long as so many of the girls who do the binding and tying are paid by piece-work this will probably be the case.

A few special pieces of tackle will be found detailed in their appropriate places.

CHAPTER III.

BAITS.

Bacon Skin — Cockles — Crabs — Cuttle — Earthworms — Eels —
Garfish — Gentles — Herrings — Horse-Mackerel — Lamperns —
Limpets — Lugworms — Mackerel — Mudworms — Mussels —
Oysters — Pilchards — Prawns — Ragworms — Rock Ling —
Sand-eels — Shrimps — Smelts — Snails — Sprats — Squid —
Whelks — White Sandworms — Ground-baits.

HE difficulty of obtaining baits is very often the sea angler's greatest stumbling-block, for though sea fish feed on a great variety of food, it is sometimes next to impossible to obtain anything suitable. In the writer's youthful days, he made his début as a sea fisherman on Brighton Pier. His ideas on the subject of angling were rather general than particular, and knowing that most sea fish devour their own species, he thought that any piece of fish would do for bait. The result was a failure. Next day, having noted that certain brother anglers placed mussels on their hooks, he imitated them, and soon hauled over the side of the pier three whiting pout, in the capture of which he experienced the pure, unalloyed delight common to youngsters on taking fish for the first time. If he had then been able to study the following list of baits, he would probably have added to his basket.

I have endeavoured to make this chapter as comprehensive as possible, so that, however badly off the angler may think himself for bait, by looking through the long list given he may chance upon something procurable. The names are arranged in alphabetical order, for convenience of reference. Bait-boxes, and the cutting-board, the use of which is always advisable when fishing from a boat, have already been described on page 33.

Bacon Skin.—Out of bacon skin a very fair imitation sand-eel can be made (Fig. 39). The skin should be soaked, scraped, and cut into long, thin strips, about in wide and 3in. or 4in. long. The point of the hook is then put through the end of a strip, and the hook carried right through to the top of the shank, where a couple of turns of twist are necessary to keep the skin in position. Bass and pollack often take this bait freely.

Cockles.—These little shell-fish have not much repute as a bait, except for whiting pout, but may be tried when nothing better can be obtained. They may be found, in some localities, along the seashore when the tide is very low; they lie a little below the surface, and a small hoe, or rake, is often used to dig them up.

Skin Bair. Crabs.—The common green crab is so well known as hardly to need a description. It abounds among rocks, in harbours, and may even be found among the stones of a pebbly beach. In its ordinary condition it is not much used as a bait, except for lobster pots, and, pounded up, as ground-bait. A quantity may easily be obtained by sinking a piece of netting stretched on to a hoop, in the centre of which is a piece of meat. On lifting up the net, some crabs will usually be found feeding on the meat. Crabs are a great nuisance to the ground or bottom-fisher in harbours, taking bait after bait off the hook. When about to cast its shell—a process in which some are engaged at most periods of the year—the green crab becomes very valuable as bait, and is then known as

Soft Crab. In this condition it is found hiding under stones and among nooks and crannies in harbours, which afford the necessary concealment from its enemies. Mr. Wilcocks recommends residents near harbours having muddy shores to contrive a number of artificial shelters, by means of old

earthenware pots, old saucepans, &c., to the number of 200 or 300, placing them on the shore between half tide and low water mark, so arranged that a small hole is left for the crab to enter. By this means, baits are always available to the angler—or someone else. Soft crabs are the best known baits for flounders, and in brackish water fresh-water eels and bass take them greedily. They are rather tough, and not easily taken off the hook by fully-fledged individuals of their own species.

The Hermit, or Soldier Crab, passes a hermit-like existence in shells belonging to departed whelks. The soft, tail portion, is a good bait, used whole, for pout and haddock. Occasionally, cod will take it. These crabs may be obtained from trawlers and the owners of lobster-pots, and a few are generally to be found among the rocks near low water mark.

Cuttle Pish.—This is the most ugly bait the angler in salt water is likely to be concerned with. The body consists of a sort of pouch, from which spread out a number of long arms, furnished with suckers arranged in rows. They frequently take the bait intended for other fish, and on being brought to the surface should be promptly gaffed, and then pressed under water again until they have expended the means of defence which Nature has given them—a bag of ink-like fluid, which clouds the water around them. A useful gaff for hooking up this fish is made by lashing a large fish hook, or triangle of hooks, with the barbs filed off, on to a stick. As a bait the cuttle is very valuable, being not only liked by many fish, but possessing such a degree of toughness that it is not easily washed or bitten off the hook; for fishing in a strong current it is very suitable. Bass, cod, and conger most favour this bait; but it is taken by many other fish. In fishing for haddock, it is an excellent plan to place a piece of cuttle on the hook, tipping the point with a mussel.

Earthworms.—Large lobworms are used for trailing for pollack when nothing better can be obtained (see page 29), and for ground fishing in brackish water. They should be tried when ragworms cannot be obtained. They can be picked up in great

quantities off closely-mown lawns, and by the sides of garden paths, at any time during the night, unless the wind blows roughly; on windy nights they should be searched for in sheltered spots. They can, of course, only be seen by the light of a lantern, and are more abundant after a showery day than during a spell of dry weather. Redworms and brandlings, which are found in old dungheaps, are also occasionally used in harbour fishing with success. Earthworms can be kept for a considerable time in damp moss, which should be changed occasionally and the dead worms picked out. The longer the worms are in the moss, the better they are for bait.

Eels.—Small fresh-water eels, or elvers as they are called make excellent whiffing baits for bass and pollack. They are not easily obtained, and should be sought for under stones in brooks, an iron table-fork being held in readiness to impale them immediately they are discovered. Young conger eels make equally good baits for the same purpose; they are to be found in little pools, and under rocks left bare by the receding tide. In a bay where a stream trickles down a valley, over the beach, and among the rocks, into the sea, they lie under those rocks below high water mark by which the fresh water passes. When the eels are too large for use—over 6in. or 7in. in length—a portion of them can be used. To bait with eels, see page 28.

The Garfish, Longnose, Snipe-Eel, or Sea-Needle.— Small pieces of this fish, which is more fully described in Chapter IX., are sometimes used as baits for conger, whiting, and skate; and a strip cut from its side is occasionally trailed for pollack, mackerel, and bass.

Gentles.—These are the maggets found in fly-blown meat, and are a very useful bait for bottom-fishing in fresh water. Grey mullet will sometimes take them in harbours. They can generally be obtained, during the summer months, at any butcher's. They should be kept in bran or damp sand, in a cellar or some other cool, dark place.

The Herring.—This valuable food fish is very useful as a

bait for pout, cod, haddock, turbot, and conger; in fact, most kinds of sea fish will take it. It is generally to be obtained from the fishermen, or at the fishmongers'. In some of the Scotch lochs it sometimes takes the fly. As it is an oily fish, it forms a good addition to the ground-bait net, and for this purpose is largely used in America.

Horse Mackerel.—This fish is described in Chapter IX. It is not much used as a bait, except in prawn nets and lobster-pots.

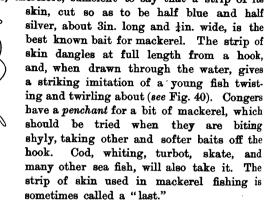
Lamperns and Lampreys.—These fish, of which there are several varieties, have the appearance of eels, but in the place of a mouth have a sucking apparatus. They are chiefly valuable as a bait for turbot, but the angler in salt water will find them useful as a whiffing bait for pollack, mackerel, and bass. In the spring, the lesser lamprey, a little creature only about 6in. long, is to be found in the shallows of many streams, probably scouring after spawning. For whiffing or trailing, they are used in the same manner as small eels.

The Limpet.—This little fish inhabits a small, conical shell, and is to be found closely adhering to rocks. Limpets are not good baits, but whiting pout and sea bream will often take them. The soft part, with a very small portion of the hard part, should be placed on the hook, the point of which should go through the hard portion. It is by no means a lasting bait, unless dried for half an hour in the sun, when it toughens. It is very little use to endeavour to pull limpets from rocks, for the moment they are touched they put out all their stick-fast powers to the utmost. A sudden tap with a hammer easily knocks them from their hold.

Lugworms are excellent baits for most ground-feeding fish, but are unpleasant to fish with, having a fluid interior, which runs out at the slightest provocation, on which account they should be used whole. They are from 4in. to 6in. in length, and may be easily found by digging with a garden fork in the sand where worm casts are noticed. Whiting and whiting pout take these worms greedily, and, as a matter of fact, they are good baits for most sea fish. To keep lugworms, place them in

a heap of wet sand and seaweed, in a cellar or other cool place.

The Mackerel. — This fish is honoured with a chapter to itself; it is, therefore, sufficient to say that a strip of its



The Mudworm.—This is only another Fig. 40. The Mackerel name for the ragworm (which see).

Batt, or "Last."

The Mussel.—An invaluable bait, and probably more used than any other. It is too well known to need description. Not the least of its virtues is the length of time it will keep alive when placed in a basket or hamper, cast into any quiet nook below high water mark. Mussels are found on rocks, under seaweed, attached to the piles of piers, on a gravel bottom-in fact, they are ubiquitous. Almost all sea fish may be caught with their assistance. If the fish are large-mouthed, such as whiting, large mussels should be used; while for pouts small ones should be picked out. Some anglers bake them in their shells for a few minutes before using for bait, but I cannot recommend this plan. It certainly makes the mussel pleasanter to use, but far less attractive to the fish. To open mussels requires a little practice. The point of the knife should be inserted between the shells at the broadest part, and given a twist, which levers the shell open. The fish has somewhat the appearance of an oyster turned yellow; a small yellow heart, or

tongue, will be noticed. Into this the point of the hook should be stuck, taken right through, round the mussel, and in again through the gristly part by which the shell was fastened to the rocks. When fish are repeatedly robbing the hooks baited with mussels, it is an excellent plan to tie a piece of cotton or thread round the bait. Mussels, or portions of them, are the common bait for dabs. When fishing at anchor for mackerel they are sometimes used; they are good baits for haddock, and, as I have said, are taken well by most sea fish.

Oysters, as fish baits, I have no personal experience of, but their beards are used with great success, for bass and other fish, by Mr. T. R. Sachs, an accomplished salt-water angler. Any fishmonger's assistant would, no doubt, be able to supply the beards by the hundred for a small consideration. I see no reason why the other portion of the oyster should not be equally killing, and imagine it would prove to be better than mussels.

Pilchards, or Cornish sardines, as they are sometimes called, are not often to be obtained far from Cornwall and Devon. The flesh of this fish is an excellent bait for whiting, cod, conger, haddock, and skate. The entrails, however, are better, and will take almost any fish that swims in the sea. When fishing for mackerel at anchor they should always be used, if available. As they give off a large quantity of oil, they form a valuable addition to any ground-bait mixture. In cutting up a pilchard for bait, it is usual to scale it, cut off the head and tail, split it up the back into two pieces, remove the backbone, and then cut each side into as many strips, a little under lin. wide, as it will make. When using half a pilchard for conger or other large fish, the bait should not be cut in half until the moment it is required, as the oil which comes away from it when fresh cut, seems to attract the fish. Pilchards are only taken in nets by professional fishermen, from whom they are to be obtained.

Prawns are well known to every visitor to the seaside. They may usually be obtained from the fishmonger, or by searching with a hand-net in the pools, among the rocks, at low tide

Pollack will take them alive, and they are a good bait for mullet, flounders, dabs, eels, and smelts, if peeled. This operation is a little difficult unless the prawns are boiled, but they are far more killing raw.

Ragworm, Mudworm, or Pollack Worm.—This is a long, flat worm, about the size of a brandling, with a fringe of legs on each side. It is found in mudbanks below and about high water mark, and is easily obtained by digging. The unsavoury black mud of harbours contains thousands of these worms, and any fisherman's son will obtain a can full for a few pence. The largest ragworms are found under large stones, and in nooks and crannies between rocks; but they are not so plentiful as the smaller kind in the mud. At places like Brighton, Hastings, and Eastbourne, where there are neither harbours nor creeks, they are not found. Ragworms rank high among baits. Two or three of them, hooked through the head, are a good whiffing bait much liked by pollack. There is nothing better for the bottom hook of a paternoster when harbour fishing, the ragworm being much affected by flounders, dabs, and freshwater eels. For sand-smelt fishing they are the best bait Ragworms should be kept in a little seaweed and sea water, and looked over at least once a day, when the water should be changed. A shallow, wooden box, about 1ft. square, with a cover, is the best thing to keep them in. All dead or wounded worms should be removed. Some people keep these worms for a night in powdered saltpetre or salt. This kills and toughers them: but I doubt if they are 80 attractive to the fish after this pickling process.

The Rock Ling, or Sea Loach.—This is a useful little fish for pollack whiffing, but is not so good as a sand-eel, or small conger or fresh-water eel, which latter it somewhat resembles in shape. In colour, it is a light brown, with dark spots down the sides of the back. They should be searched for under stones, among rocks, and are sometimes taken with fine float tackle—the hook baited with a shrimp, or soft part of the limpet—in pools among rocks. Where fresh water runs

to the sea through seaweed-covered rocks they frequently abound. They spin well on a Chapman spinner, or may be arranged on the small, eel-trailing tackle shown on page 28, Fig. 25.

The Sand-eel, Launce, Lant, or Horn-Eel is eagerly devoured by all kinds of large fish, and is the most valuable of baits. There are three varieties: The grey or brown back. the green back, and the plum-coloured or purple back. The two latter are launce, the first-named being the sandeel. In shape they are not unlike an eel, but are silvery. They are found buried at the edge of the sand, when the water is at its lowest, and are commonly obtained by digging and raking, the best times for finding them being moonlight nights during spring tides. Immediately one is seen, it should be seized, for they bury themselves in the sand with great rapidity. A better method of taking them is with a seine net. worked either from boats or the shore. A seine net, and the method of working it, will be found described in great detail in Mr. Wilcocks' "Sea Fisherman." As so very few amateurs are likely to require these nets, the description here seems unnecessary. In the Channel Islands, the sandeel is used alive; and this system has been introduced by Mr. Wilcocks to the amateur and professional fishermen of this country, many of whom have tried it with great success, particularly in bass and pollack fishing. To keep sand-eels alive, they should be placed in a pear-shaped basket, called a courge (see page 32), made of fine osier twigs, with an opening, closed by a flat piece of cork, and towed after the boat, or moored in a suitable spot. Dead sand-eels are also excellent baits. They can be either trailed, or worked on spinning tackle (see page 28), for bass, pollack, and mackerel, or used on groundlines for whiting, mackerel, and, in fact, any kind of sea fish. To bait with these little fish, put the point of the hook in at the mouth and out at the gills, catching up a small piece of skin below the gills. If the tide is slack, the hook can be put through the back, near the head. When half sand-eels are used, they should not be cut until they are required for the hook. Sand-eels are excellent eating.

Shrimps.—These well-known little creatures are very useful baits. When alive, pollock will take them, and in their raw state, if peeled, they are also a first-rate bait for mullet, smelts, and small flat fish. For harbour fishing they are, however, usually boiled; but to do so is a mistake. To keep shrimps alive, it is necessary to place them in a box, pierced with holes (a finely woven basket will do), moored in salt water.

Smelts and Atherine, or Sand-smelts.—These little fish abound in harbours and sandy bays. They are easily captured on a fine paternoster (see pages 54, 55), and large hauls are sometimes made by means of fine-meshed seine nets. They are a good bait, and can be used alive, trailed or mounted on spinning tackle, when sand-eels are not to be obtained. They are often used by professional fishermen for baiting long lines, conger and turbot being very fond of them. Their great fault is that they are soft, and easily spoiled; thus, for spinning, a good supply should be taken. The sand-smelt may be distinguished from the smelt proper by having rays in the second dorsal fin, which in the true smelt is adipose or fatty, somewhat like that of the Salmonidæ.

Snails.—Garden snails may be used for whiting pout when nothing better is obtainable.

Sprats.—As these valuable little food-fishes are only caught during the autumn and winter months, they are not much used by the angler in salt water; but they are a good bait, and are taken by the fish which are caught on the pilchard bait.

Squid.—The squid is very similar to the cuttle fish, but is, if anything, rather a better bait. There are several varieties. All that has been said concerning the cuttle as a bait equally applies to this fish.

Whelks.—I am not aware that whelks are used as a bait, except for cod, and occasionally for pout. They are taken by dredging, in lobster-pots, and on long lines, to which are fastened small crabs strung on twine.

White Sandworms are found in sand and sandy mud. A good many fish will take them, particularly sand-smelts.

Ground-baits.—References to ground-baiting will be found scattered through this book, and I need only here mention a few recipes for some of these invaluable mixtures. One of the best for use in slack water is that known in the Channel Islands as chervin. It simply consists of very young shrimps, which are caught in a fine-meshed net and salted down. A few spoonfuls. mixed with a little water, are thrown in when it is desired to attract grey mullet. Another mixture, which answers as groundbait for many sea fish, consists of green crabs pounded up, and limpets, their shells broken, and themselves chopped up small. Green crabs may also be pounded up with chalk or oyster shells. Pilchard guts, or pieces of the fish cut up, are extremely useful for attracting fish, owing to the amount of oil given off. Fish meeting with globules of this oil very likely follow up the scent until they come to the ground-bait, by which is the angler's tackle. In France, America, and Australia. ground-baiting is not uncommon; but it is little practised in England. In America, herrings are pounded up in a mill to make ground-bait for mackerel. At San Sebastian, balls of clay, heads of sardines, and potatoes, are thrown in to attract grey mullet: crumbs of bread are sometimes thrown on the surface of the sea for the same purpose.

I have spoken of ground-bait as attracting the fish. The vulgar idea is that it possesses that property alone. It has, however, two other virtues, which are, if anything, more valuable than the first-named. It causes fish to feed; and secondly, it lulls their suspicions. These remarks apply with equal, if not greater, force to angling in fresh water.

The angler cannot be too particular about his baits. He should have a goodly supply; they should be the best obtainable, and always be tended with care if kept for more than the day.

CHAPTER IV.

ROD FISHING AND HAND-LINING.

Angling from Pier-heads — Ground-baiting — Paternostering — Fishing with Float Tackle—Drift-line Fishing—Fly Fishing—Angling in Harbours—Smelt and Sand-smelt Fishing—Angling from the Open Shore—Hand-lining—Taking Marks.

IER-HEAD, harbour, and shore fishing are all peculiarly adapted to those persons who, when in boats on the restless ocean, are wont to render a votive, albeit unwilling. offering to the sea god. It must be acknowledged that, as a general rule, the quantity of fish taken from these places is not great, but, more often than not, this is owing rather to lack of knowledge and skill on the part of the angler than to any scarcity of fish. I say this advisedly, for there are a few salt-water anglers who rarely fish from piers without being successful. At the same time, there are certain places-carefully avoided, no doubt, by the said skilful anglers -where, from causes not easily determined, the fish are few and small. It should be remembered that fish which frequent harbours and haunt the piles of piers are fished for a great deal, and get shy, like, but not to the same extent as, their harassed fresh-water brethren. Fine tackle, therefore, is very advisable, and the importance of ground-baiting can hardly be overrated.

When about to fish from a pier-head, or, indeed, anywhere

else, the first thing to do is to make some inquiries of local anglers, the piermaster, old salts, or the fishmonger, and obtain some idea of the fish which are likely to be caught. Knowing this, consult the chapter on Baits, and see what are at your disposal. Do not be misled by being told in winter of the fish which are caught during the summer, and vice versa. For instance, it is little or no use fishing for bass in December. If no reliable information can be obtained. the best thing to do is to use your own judgment, trying all kinds of baits and various methods of using them. Some of the following fish may nearly always be expected: Bass, between April and the end of August, or later; rock-fish, pout, whiting, mackerel, coal-fish, pollack, horse-mackerel, grey mullet, red mullet (rarely), codlings, smelts, congers, flounders, plaice, dabs, chad (small sea bream), and cod occasionally. There are also two prickly little fish, whose spines inflict nasty wounds-the long-spined bullhead and the dragonet. They are not unlike miller's thumbs. They may easily be known by their ugliness and ferocious appearance. I cannot call to mind any one place where all these fish are to be caught, but the list is fairly representative of what may be expected. Some of these fish, such as flounders and dabs, are not found on a rocky bottom: and others, e.g., wrasse and pout, are rarely taken except on or near rocks. If the angler can discover the nature of the bottom where he is fishing, he can in general form a good idea of the fish he may expect and the best baits to use. A very simple arrangement, used by sailors, and shown in section on page 34, can be used where the water is so deep that the bottom is not visible at dead low water. It is simply a cone-shaped lead plummet, varying in size according to the depth of water to be sounded, in the bottom of which is a hollow space containing tallow; the cord passes through the ring on the top. This weight is let down to the bottom, and, on being hauled up again, whatever is sticking to the tallow-sand, mud. fragments of seaweed, shells, &c .- tells the angler of what the bottom is composed. A little judicious plumbing will sometimes determine the exact position of a cluster of rocks, near which

it is very desirable to angle for certain fish, especially pollack, coalfish, pout, and conger. As a sounding lead is often required to take the depth when drift-line fishing, it is a good plan to have the lead made according to the shape shown in Fig. 37, when it will both take the depth and determine the nature of the bottom. The cord to which it is attached should be marked off in fathoms by pieces of twine put twice or thrice round it, and then between the strands. In heaving the lead, it is then only necessary to count the number of knots which pass through the hand to know the depth in fathoms.

A perusal of Chapter III. will give all the information required concerning baits. It will be sufficient to say here, that among the best are sand-eels, ragworms, mussels, beards of oysters, pilchards (entrails or body), strips of mackerel skin, and shrimps, alive for pollack and the lesser flat fish, peeled but not boiled for most other fish. Ground-baiting, as I said at the commencement of this chapter, is all-important for success; several mixtures of the kind will be found on page 45. In grey mullet fishing, some of these are merely thrown on the surface; but more commonly the mixture is placed in a net, with a stone or two, and sunk within a foot of the bottom, as close as possible to the spot where the baits are dangling ready for the fish to seize them. A judicious shake now and again, given to the cord to which the net is attached, sets loose some of the bait, which the fish seize. In placing the ground-bait net, the angler should note carefully the set of the tide, and place his tackle so that whatever is washed out of the net is carried past his hooks. The groundbait not only attracts fish, but it induces them to take the bait on the hook, under the belief that it is one of those harmless fragments which have come out of the net.

The paternoster, rod and line, described in the second chapter form the most generally useful tackle for fishing from pier-heads. The hooks baited, the tackle should be let down into the sea, and when the lead touches the bottom the line should be kept tight. When a fish bites, the top of the rod will be jerked slightly; or if it is a big fish, there may be one dead,

heavy pull. I usually hold the rod in my right hand, and bring the line over my first finger, then under the second, third, and fourth. I thus detect very light bites by the pull of the line, which is instantly felt on the back of the first finger—bites which sometimes do not perceptibly move the top of the rod. On feeling a bite, strike sharply, and if the fish is hooked, play him carefully, keeping a tight line. With regard to the strength of the tackle, that should vary according to the sorts and sizes of fish which are caught off the pier. If conger abound, the bottom hook should be mounted on fine gimp (see page 23); and single salmon gut is certainly not strong enough for large pollack, for these fish cannot be "played," but must be held, otherwise they go down to the bottom, and get "hung up" among seaweed and rocks. Again, if the angler is obliged to fish from the top of a lofty pier, where he can bring neither gaff nor landing-net to bear on his fish, he must use rather a large hook, and tackle strong enough to lift the largest fish he is likely to catch on to the top of the pier. At the same time, if too coarse tackle is used, the sport will be bad; and it is often worth while to use very fine tackle, risking the chance of losing a big pollack or conger, and make a good basket, rather than use coarse, strong tackle, fit to hold a halibut, and catch next to nothing. The size of the lead at the end of the paternoster has to vary according to the force of the tide, the depth of water, and thickness of the main line, for the water exerts more pressure on a thick line than on a fine one, and therefore renders necessary a heavier weight to keep' it down. In rough weather, very heavy leads are necessary. The paternoster can be fished, when advisable, twenty or thirty yards from the pier. To cast it out, a quantity of line must be uncoiled, the lead drawn up within about 10ft. of the top of the rod, and swung out after the method described in spinning for bass in Chapter V. Immediately the tackle touches the water, let out more line, so that it be not dragged back, and the advantage of distance lost.

Float tackle (see page 25) is sometimes used off piers in ground

fishing, but it is only useful where the water is not deeper than the rod is long. At greater depths, sliding floats may be used (these slide down the line as the fish is pulled up, and allow the line to be reeled in); but they do not always answer, and the



FIG. 41. SLIDING FLOAT.

paternoster is preferable. One is shown in Fig. 41. A piece of hog's bristle, which is so long that it will pass through the rings of the rod, but not through the rings on the float, is tied on to the line. When fishing with the live sand-eel for bass and pollack, a float is a decided advantage; and if a fine silk line is used, the bait can be let out with the tide for a long distance. This is similar to the Nottingham method of fishing, described in the chapter on bass. When fishing on the bottom, with float tackle, it is necessary to find the depth, and fix the float so that the bait hangs a few inches above the bottom. For this purpose, the small plummet shown on page 34 should be fastened to the hook, and let down to the bottom, and the float moved until the top of it is a little below the surface. If the tide is rising, it will be necessary to put the float higher every half-hour; if it is falling, to put it lower. Drift-line fishing, without a float, and with or without sinkers, may also be practised from pier-heads when the tide is sufficiently strong to take out the bait—sandeels, ragworms, or live shrimps. The angler should always keep his eyes open for bass, mackerel, and grey mullet, all of which, at times, feed on the surface, and if he sees them, angle for them after the methods described in this book. Both flies and spinning-baits can

be cast from piers which are not too high, and even from lofty piers fish may be taken by this means, if they are swimming close to the piles.

Night fishing is often very successful, particularly for cod and

conger, which latter fish are in the habit of coming into the shallows at night in search of food. Sea bream also feed well at night; and, as a general rule, early dawn and sunset are far better times to fish than during the day; and the best sport is nearly always obtained during the two hours previous to high water.

When angling from pier-heads, it is always a good plan to throw out a gimp leger, made according to the directions on page 24, and baited with squid, herring, pilchard, mackerel, or some other large bait, on good-sized hooks. This need not necessarily be attached to a rod; but where the angler has a stiff fly rod with the stout top, as described on page 7, he can use it for this purpose. This line will take conger, bass, big pollack, and (but rarely) red mullet or a wandering cod.

In harbour fishing, the methods employed are similar to those described for pier-head fishing; but finer tackle may generally be used, for, as a rule, the fish do not run to any great size. Here, again, it is important to know what is to be caught, and to obtain all the information possible. The most common harbour fish are dabs, flounders, and small pollack. If a river runs into the harbour, fresh-water eels may also be expected, and bass in the early autumn. Sea trout are also taken occasionally. As a rule, the best baits to use are ragworms, soft crab, or peeled, unboiled shrimps, on either paternoster, leger, or float tackle. I imagine the beard of an oyster would also be a good bait. If the leger is used, and bass are known to be in the harbour, the bottom hook may be rather large, and baited with a piece of squid (sand-eels, alive or dead, are better, if they can be obtained); and, on a smaller hook, above the lead, either ragworms, soft crab, or unboiled, peeled shrimp. When it is desirable to fish some distance out, this is the best tackle to use, for it can easily be thrown out thirty or forty yards. The weight of the lead must depend on the force of the current—an ounce being often quite enough, three ounces not always sufficient. Bass are mostly caught after August, and during spring tides. If the angler is fishing just under the point of the rod, and the water is deep and the current strong, the paternoster should be used; but float tackle is preferable for water 18ft. or

less deep. Gut of medium size is, as a rule, sufficiently strong. Directions for using the paternoster have already been given. The hooks for flounders and dabs need not be large—about No. 7 or No. 8—and I have noticed that I have caught most of these fish when my tackle has been fine.

In some harbours the tide runs with great force, and the best places to fish for bass are just by the edge of the current, where very heavy leads are necessary to keep the baits on the bottom. This fishing is usually done from a boat anchored in the tideway. Professional fisherman use for this purpose a boat-shaped lead, with a long, hemp snooding. A better tackle is the sea leger, already described on page 24. The leads for this will have to be specially cast, as they are not commonly sold of the necessary weight. What weight is necessary depends so much on circumstances—the strength of the current, the depth of the water, and the thickness of the line—that it is impossible to lay down any definite rules on the subject. The lead should work on the stoutest gimp, and be kept in its place by two small, split bullets, or glass beads, fitting the gimp tightly. The hooks have to be large, and on strong gimp or very strong salmon gut (not always to be obtained), as fish play very heavily in the strong current. Where the lead is so heavy that a rod cannot be used, I as often as not adopt the tackle of the professional fisherman, merely rendering it somewhat finer towards the hook end by means of gut or fine gimp.

Smelt and sand-smelt fishing is a thing of itself. These delicate little fish swim in shoals a little below the surface, and should be fished for with roach hooks, on the finest of tackle. It is most difficult to detect their bites; but skilled London roach fishermen, among whom are some of the most skilful anglers in the world, can catch them on light float tackle, for they can detect very slight movements in the float—invisible to ordinary eyes—which indicate the bites. Less skilful anglers use a paternoster with three, four, or even more roach hooks (No. 0 or No. 1). The gut links to the hooks should not be more than 5in. or 6in. in length, and put so far apart that they do not entangle. The main line need not be thicker

than two thicknesses of ordinary sewing thread; and if this fine line is used, a small pistol bullet is a sufficient weight. If a coarser line is used, a lead weighing a half-ounce or an ounce will be necessary, or the line will not run through the rings of the rod. The best baits for sand-smelts are either small pieces of ragworm or unboiled shrimp, and the hook should just be tipped with the bait. As many of the bites cannot be felt on the paternoster, and as the fish, when plentiful, and in the humour, bite very freely, it is a good plan to strike every few seconds. when fish will often be found hooked. This is usually done; but I am inclined to think that, with an exceedingly fine, undressed silk main line, such as Nottingham anglers use for chub fishing, and a light cane rod, most of the bites can be felt. I fish that way myself; but whichever method is followed, the result will be very much the same. Ground-bait is sometimes used for smelt fishing; but as a rule it is not necessary. If there is no current, a little can be thrown in occasionally, and allowed to sink; but if the stream is strong, it should be put in a net, and sunk a few feet below the surface, near the hooks. The spots in harbours where smelts are mostly found are near the outfalls of drains, ditches, and streams of fresh water. The true smelt is not often found on the South Coast, but the atherine, or sandsmelt, abounds. On the East and West Coasts the atherine is wanting, and the smelt plentiful. These fish are more often angled for in harbours than elsewhere; but they are also taken in bays and up creeks.

So far I have only dealt with fishing in harbours and from pier-heads. In some places, angling may be carried on successfully from the open shore. Fly fishing from rocky points for bass and pollack will be found described in Chapters V. and VI. A paternoster can be used where it can be got out into deep water. Those narrow inlets of the sea, such as one meets with in Scotland, where they are called sea lochs, often afford very fair rod fishing from the shore, as the water runs deep in many places close to the edge. Whatever baits can be obtained may be tried, especially the mussel; and the fish taken will vary according to the locality. In some places

whiting pout will abound, in others wrasse, and in other again, youthful coalfish, known in Scotland as cuddies—whid little fish, by the way, take a fly very well. In the south England, bass will often be taken; and there is always the chance of a large pollack off any rock round which the tid sets strongly, for pollack delight in a good flow of water.

Fish may sometimes be caught from the beach by throung out a line a considerable distance. An ingenious plant adopted by fishermen at Deal, and other places on the Eaccoast, by which many fish are taken; it may hardly be terms angling, but merits a description. The tackle (see Fig. 42)—t

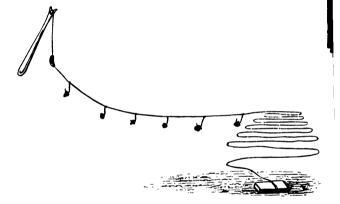


FIG. 42. THE DEAL SHORE TACKLE.

begin at the far end of the line—starts with a button; then comes a short piece termed the sling line, then a lead, and, following that, the main line—with a few hooks, either on short snoodings or on the wire chopsticks described on page 57. An essential part of the apparatus is a springy, ash stick, about 3ft. long, tapered, and with a two-pronged fork at the end The hooks being baited with squid, mackerel, or any bait sufficiently tough, the fisherman coils his line carefully on the shore, except the portion with the hooks, lead, and sling line; these he lays out in a line along the beach. He next places the button, which is at the extreme end of the line, in the fork

at the end of the stick, swings the lead once or twice, and then casts it out as far as he can. The lead used weighs about 1½lb. The angler, with light tackle and dressed line, can throw out his sea leger or paternoster just as far as the Deal fishermen can their heavy leads. Many Thames fishermen, indeed, can cast much farther. There is occasionally one objection to the light leger lead when used from the shore: the wash of the waves brings it in shore; or, if the lead is not moved, the line beyond the lead is washed back, and entangles with the line above the lead. When this is the case, the paternoster should be used, but the ordinary pear-shaped lead should be exchanged for a flat one. If two holes are

drilled in this flat lead, and stout pieces of wire fixed in them, so that the ends project lin., a very light lead will hold the bottom (Fig. 43). I need hardly say that no leaded tackle (unless used with a float) should be thrown out over a rocky bottom, for hooks, lead, and line, are all sure to catch, and loss of tackle is a certainty. The angler must be some distance above rocks to be able to fish them, except, as I have said, with float tackle. As a rule, flat fish alone will be taken on a line thrown off a sandy shore; but if the place fished is at the



Fig. 43.
IMPROVED PATERNOSTER LEAD
FOR THROWING OUT ON
SANDY BOTTOMS.

mouth of a river, bass (see Chapter V.) will often be caught on the paternoster or leger.

Float tackle is sometimes used from rocks with great success, the fish taken being principally pollack and bass. The subject is treated fully later on. The angler who is used to live-bait fishing for jack will have no difficulty in casting his float tackle, if not too light, 40yds. out to sea, or more. Easy casting depends on three things: heavy tackle, a light line, and a rod fitted with proper rings (see page 6). Light tackle cannot be thrown with a heavy line. The best plan is to

use what is termed Nottingham tackle, and to cast from the reel. I have gone into the matter in detail in the chapter on bass fishing.

A few lines on hand-line fishing at anchor must bring this chapter to a close. Hand-lining can hardly be termed angling but it is generally practised, and, as it must be resorted to on a few occasions, when very heavy leads and coarse lines are necessary, on account of the force and depth of the water, this book would be incomplete without some description of the method. A hand-line is simply a light, hemp cord, tanned or dressed with a mixture of turpentine (or paraffin) and tar, with a weight at the end, and two or more hooks, kept apart by spreaders or chopsticks. Of this tackle there are several varieties, but I need only mention two. The first is known as



Fig. 44. Tackle for Hand-lining (Kentish Big).

the Kentish Rig, the illustration of which (Fig. 44) renders any lengthy verbal description unnecessary. The hooks should, as a rule, be on gimp or gut, stout or fine according to the The swivels fish sought after. and spreader should be of brass. The spreader is wound twice round a piece of leather, which passes through the lead. line is fastened by going through a slit in, and then round, the leather. Each arm of the spreader should be 9in. long, and the gut attachment of the hooks about 2ft. The weight of lead may be anything

from 2lb. to 5lb., according to circumstances. In using this tackle, it is thrown overboard, and the line allowed to run out until the lead touches the ground. It is then hauled up 2ft., when the hooks will be just off the bottom. When fishing for flat fish, the lead may be a little lower. Another kind of hand-line is made without the cross spreader, but with what are termed chopsticks of wire, placed on the line above the

lead; in fact, a paternoster, in which the hooks are kept away from the main line by pieces of wire. Mr. Wilcocks' method—the best with which I am acquainted—of making this tackle is to take four turns at one end of each of the brass-wire chopsticks, and so make a spiral coil, through which the main line can be passed. A knot has to be placed above and below each chopstick, and the portion of the line where they work has to be served with waxed thread, to keep them from wearing the line. To the end of the wires are attached the gut lengths and hooks. The chopsticks should be 2ft. apart, and the gut or snooding to the hooks as long as may be without fouling. The advantage of this tackle is three different depths being fished at one time.

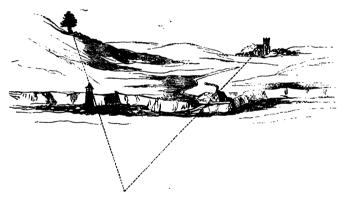


FIG. 45. HOW TO TAKE MARKS.

In using hand-lines, they should always be held in the hand, and not tied to the boat seat and allowed to fish themselves. Immediately a bite is felt a jerk should be given, and the tackle hauled up, hand over hand, as quickly as possible, for fish which are not played on a rod often get off the hook. The fisherman who can haul the fastest takes the most fish. Success depends most of all on the boat being at the right spot, and for this the boatman is, of course, responsible. He finds his position by marks on the coast; and people who

do much sea fishing should make a point of learning the marks of the different places where fish abound, and how to take them. Taking marks is a simple matter (see Fig. 45). Supposing that the spot is a mile out at sea, look half a mile down the coast to the left, and get an object near the shore—a lighthouse—in a line with an object in the distance—a tree; then look half a mile to the right, and get two more objects in a line—say, a cottage and a church. These four objects constitute the necessary marks for the spot in question, and four objects are absolutely necessary. If a diagram is made, it will be seen that lines drawn across the objects out to sea meet at a certain point, which is the spot desired to be marked. To find the spot again, it is necessary to first get, say, the lighthouse and the tree and the boat in a line, and then row along that line until the cottage covers the church.

Hand-line fishing is wet work, but in warm weather, when the fish are plentiful and large, it affords good fun. The sport, however, is usually very small compared with that afforded by angling in salt water.

CHAPTER V.

THE BASS

(BASSE, SALMON BASS, WHITE SALMON, or SEA DACE).

Appearance—Habits—Food—Methods of Angling for—Fly Fishing—Spinning—Drift-lining—Nottingham Tackle—Ground Fishing.

HE bass decidedly holds the highest place among those sea fishes which afford sport to the angler. It belongs to the perch family: but when the prickly dorsal fin peculiar to perch is not erect, it may be, and, indeed, sometimes is, mistaken for salmon, and sold under that name by cunning fish hawkers to unsuspecting visitors to the seaside. back of the fish is a dark blue, the sides and belly silvery. The mouth is leathery, and hooks stuck in it rarely come away; but on the tongue and along the jaws are sharp-pointed teeth, which frequently fray or cut the stoutest salmon gut, as many a bass fisher knows to his sorrow. Bass vary from a few ounces to 15lb., or more, in weight, and there are tales told of much larger fish even than that; but 10lb. or 12lb. fish are not common, the average size being somewhere between 2lb, and 4lb.

Bass are not commonly found in the more Northern portions of Great Britain, but abound on the South and South-West coasts. They have been noticed in Berwick Bay and the Firth of Forth, but are not common there. They are taken on the East coast of Ireland, between Waterford and Belfast Bay.

In angling for these fish it is very essential to have some knowledge of their habits. As a general rule, bass do not approach the shore much before June, and the large fish leave about October. On the Devon coast they have been taken as early as February, but are never seen there in numbers until March. They seem easily affected by the temperature of the water, and in warm, early seasons, may be expected in shore sooner than when the spring is cold and late. Until August they are found principally shoaling off headlands and along the coast, but in that month they commence to work into estuaries, where they deposit their spawn. They show a decided preference for those rivers which have sandy or gravelly bars at their mouths. Round pier-heads and about large harbours they are to be found during the summer, and a favourite haunt is by wreckage, or any old hulk which has been moored for years in one spot. In the estuaries, they work up and down with the tide, and a point of beach stretching out at the mouth of a river is a likely place to meet with them for an hour-and-a-half after high water. In Cornish harbours there are frequently spots where pilchards are cleaned, and the entrails (a splendid bait for most sea fish) thrown into the water. Bass and many other varieties of fish are often attracted to such spots in great numbers, and may be easily taken. As a general rule, the best bass fishing is had during spring tides. While, on the coast, bass feed right in the surf, where no one but a bass fisher would expect to find fish of any kind, on calm days they may be seen basking a little way off the rocks, and at such times it is useless to fish for them; but immediately a breeze from seaward springs up, causing waves to break on the rocks, disturbing the myriads of small marine creatures on which bass feed, then, knowing that food is within their reach, they at once commence to search for it, and may be successfully angled for by some of the methods described later on. A breeze from seaward, it will be noticed, gives the angler the best chance of success; but it should be borne in mind that, after a continuance of windy weather, bass, as a rule, cease to feed on the surface, and are to be taken in deeper water, close to the bottom.

From eleven in the morning until five in the evening is, generally speaking, the worst time for bass fishing—a fact which has led some people to suppose that these fish are very difficult to catch. If, however, the day is calm, and a breeze springs up from seaward, the bass, if they are off the rocks, will feed whatever the hour may be. The exact position of the fish may often be determined by watching the seagulls, for these birds follow and hover over shoals of brit, on which the bass feed, and are often to be found near.

The bass is a very ravenous fish, and its food is of the most varied description. Small fry of almost any kind, marine insects, and sandworms, probably form its staple diet. The live sand-eel is a dainty morsel which it can hardly ever resist; and in its feeding generally it much resembles its handsome inland cousin, the perch.

Fly fishing for bass, which has been practised for about half a century, is, when the fish are feeding close to the surface, by far the most sportsmanlike and pleasurable method of catching them. The sport afforded is, indeed, little inferior to salmon fishing, for the bass are almost as strong as salmon. and what little they lack in strength they fully make up for in numbers. The great difficulty is in finding the fish, for it is little use casting where they cannot be seen breaking the surface and playing, or rather feeding, in the surf. The time spent in searching need not be wasted if the angler is in a boat, for, while he is being pulled slowly along the shore, he can trail a dead sand-eel, a strip of mackerel skin, a spinning bait, or any of the thousand-and-one devices which pollack, bass, mackerel, and a few other sea fish seize when in motion. Immediately the bass are sighted the spinning rod is taken in, and the fly deftly cast into the middle of the shoal, the boat in the meantime having been sculled very quietly to windward of the fish. But this brings me to the question of tackle, which subject merits a paragraph to itself.

Almost any rod with which the line and fly can be "got out" will do, for it is not difficult to cast a heavy line and big fly with the wind; but anyone who wishes to have the weapon most suitable for the purpose, should provide himself

with a good greenheart, grilse or salmon rod, the length of which must depend on two considerations: first, whether the fishing is principally from the shore or a boat; and, secondly, the strength of the angler. In fishing from the shore, it is desirable to have the rod as long as the angler can easily manage; but for boat fishing, it need not be so long. as the casts are shorter; 16ft. is a very useful length. It is not an impossibility to cast a line with the cane general rod already described (page 5), but the joints should be tied after the manner of fly rods, to prevent them "throwing out." The salmon rod is, however, very desirable; it should be rather stiff, and have, if possible, the snake rings described on page 6 (failing these, large ordinary upright rings), and the revolving top ring mentioned on the same page. None of the fittings should be of steel or iron. Whether the joints are spliced or fixed into one another is immaterial; but if the latter, the ferrules should be touched with vaseline or soft soap before the rod is put together: this prevents the joints from sticking. A stiff 16ft. fly rod, in three pieces, if fitted with a stiff extra top only 6in. in length, can be converted into an 11ft. rod, suitable for almost any kind of sea fishing. From the rod we come to the line, and this may be the common eight-plait hemp line used in harbour fishing. If expense is no object, a tapered, silk, salmon line is best suited for the purpose; and though tar or indiarubber dressings have been recommended by two authorities on sea fishing, I must say that, so far as my experience goes, the usual boiled oil dressing commonly used for trolling lines appears to answer as well in salt water as in fresh. An inexpensive line is described on page 8. Bass, as I have indicated, play very strongly, sometimes running eighty yards or more of line off the reel; and as nothing is more disappointing than to lose the largest fish. I would advise not less than a hundred vards of line to be provided. An old or rotten line should never be used for this fishing; in fact, hooks, line, and gut casts should all be carefully tested before being used. I always wash my line well in fresh water before leaving the seaside, and dry it carefully. This is a very necessary precaution. A large reel will obviously

be required, and this may be a plain brass check winch, or—what I much prefer—the large Nottingham wooden reel, with a guard, and a check, which can be put either on or off, as described on page 9. A reel invented by Mr. Jardine, the well-known pike angler, is also admirably adapted for this purpose. It is of metal, contains a check, and the line on it dries more quickly than on ordinary reels, being wound round several metal bars, which allow the air to get to the very centre of it. Attached should be a gut cast, on the strength of which a good deal depends. It should not be more than three yards in length, and may consist altogether of single lengths of the thickest salmon gut. If tapered, the upper half should consist of two strands of gut laid side by side, not twisted. If strong gut cannot be obtained, the cast should be of double gut from end to end. For the benefit of those anglers who make their own casts, the knots for joining lengths of gut together are described on page 20.

The salmon fisher need not go far for flies, for any gaudy, small salmon or large sea trout fly will do admirably for bass; but if flies have to be made or purchased, any of the following patterns will be found to kill well. First I would place what is practically the well-known Alexandra, with a white wing; body thin, silver tinsel; tail, either peacock herle and a few fibres of goose feathers dyed red, or the red feathers alone; hackle, peacock herle; wing, peacock herle inclosed by two grey goose feathers. Another good fly is made with a bright-red pigswool body, rather thin, silver or gold twist; tail, a rather long piece of red hackle, using similar hackle at the shoulder; wing, two tippet feathers jungle cock on either side, and golden pheasant tail. If something simpler is desired, it will be found that the thin end of a white tail feather, lashed on the inside of the hook, so that the point comes through it, will answer almost, if not quite as well, as its more gaudy and elaborate rivals. I must not, however, forget to mention a noted bass fly—the Shaldon Shiner—for the following dressing of which I am indebted to "The Sea Fisherman:" The body, broad silver tinsel, put on as thin as possible; the tail, a small brush of scarlet feathers; green, blue, and red pigs-

wool at the shoulders; and wings, bright blue feathers, to which are added half a dozen fibres of goose feather. There is an instance on record when the bass in Dartmouth harbour refused to look at artificial sand-eels, sole-skin, or other bait, but eagerly took a well-known salmon fly called the Gold-finch. It is dressed as follows: Tag, gold tinsel and black floss; tail, a golden pheasant topping; body, gold-coloured floss; pale yellow hackle; blue jay at shoulder; gold tinsel; wing composed entirely of toppings; red macaw ribs, and



FIG. 46. METHOD OF FASTENING BASS FLIES ON EYED HOOKS TO GUT.

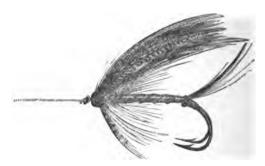


FIG. 47. THE KNOT PULLED TIGHT.

black head. Bass flies should always be tied on eyed hooks or loops of gut, for the gut near the head of fly quickly gets frayed and worn by the sharp teeth of the bass, and requires frequently renewing. With the old method of attaching the gut to the hook, as soon as the gut became worn, the fly, however good in other respects, at once became useless. I think the best method of attaching gut to large flies tied on eyed hooks is that shown in the accompanying Figures (46 and 47).

Major Turle's method (see page 15) is also very good, but more suitable for smaller flies and hooks. If the gut is not as strong as could be wished, an excellent plan is to make a loop at the end of it, and attach the fly by the method shown in the accompanying Figure (48). Two strands of gut are

thus offered to the teeth of the bass, and the fly is rarely whipped off. In fishing the mouths of rivers, it is as well to use some of the better-class bass flies, for there is always the off chance of rising a salmon or sea trout on them.

The proper tackle for fly fishing having been obtained, the next question is, how and where to use it; and as fly fishing may be a novel sport to some readers of this book, it may be well for me to give a description of the usual method of casting an artificial fly. But however well the angler may understand the method, practice alone will enable him to throw a fly well. Fly fishing in salt water is not nearly so difficult as fly fishing for trout in rivers. In fishing from the



Fig. 48. METHOD OF FASTENING ON BASS FLY TO GUT.

shore, the angler has frequently to cast against the wind, so that it is better for the beginner to commence from a boat, which can nearly always be placed to windward of the fish. Before going out fishing, a little preliminary practice in a field is very desirable. Francis Francis wrote that it was impossible on paper to teach the tyro how to cast a salmon fly, and that he should note how it is done, and then flail away to the best of his ability until he can pitch the line out somehow. The following directions may, however, be of some service: Begin by casting a short line, about half as long again as the rod. Let the line lay on the grass; then walk back a few steps, so as to get away from it. Then stand facing the end of the line, and let the rod point a little to the right of it. To make the cast, it is necessary to first get the line behind you; and to do this, bring the rod smartly

back over the right shoulder; but immediately the rod has reached a little beyond the perpendicular, check it suddenly, and the line flies out straight behind; then pause a second with the rod in this position (the longer the line, the longer should be the pause), and vigorously swish the point of the rod in the direction you wish to throw the fly. When, however, the rod has reached an angle of about 45°, check it, and, as the line flew out behind you, now it will shoot out in front of you, and fall lightly on the surface of the lawn, or water, as the case may be. The mistake beginners make is to wave the rod too violently, and, instead of letting the rod cast the line, they try to do it by violent movement with their arms. You do not want to whip the water, but merely to propel the fly through the air at an imaginary point a foot or so above that spot on the water where the fly is to fall. There is a cast used on the Spey in which the line is not allowed to fly out behind the angler, but is switched round almost in a circle. It is difficult, and requires much practice, and is hardly describable on paper. The bass angler should, however, learn it, if he can find an instructor, for it is a useful cast when fishing from the shore, with high cliffs rising immediately in the rear. To do the Spey or switch cast properly, a strong stream or tide is necessary, to extend the line; but I have seen it done fairly well on still water. When the line is extended in front of the angler, it should be lifted a little off the water, the bow of the line allowed to touch the water near the angler's feet, and then switched overhand forward. The cast requires a good deal of practice.

Supposing, now, that the angler has mastered the art of casting a fly, he should next study the best means of inducing the fish to take it. If the fly is merely a white feather, it should be drawn rapidly along the surface; but if an elaborate salmon fly, it should be worked in jerks, which has the effect of alternately opening and closing the feathers and hackles, and giving the fly the appearance of life. It is usual to cast rather to the left, and then draw the fly to the right. In time the angler may learn to cast from the left shoulder, and fish, when desirable, from right to left. Immediately a rise, or

sudden tightening of the line, is seen, or a pluck at the top of the rod felt, the angler should strike, and then look out for squalls. The fish, if a large one, will probably at once run out several yards of line, and in this first endeavour to get free he should not be checked. As he slackens speed, the point of the rod may be raised a little, and more strain put on him, and, as soon as possible, some line wound in. Successive runs, longer or shorter than the first, follow, until the fish, thoroughly exhausted, is brought up to the side of the boat, the landing-net placed under him, and the angler has killed his first bass.

There are some other points connected with fly fishing for bass which are worthy of notice. The boat should never be rowed through a school of these fish, for they are somewhat shy, and, unless the boat is kept at some distance, very few will be caught on the surface. When playing round pierheads, bass often take the fly; and the shore fisher sometimes meets with success off quays, rocky headlands, and points of land at the mouths of rivers. He requires a heavy line to throw out against the wind. The best fishing is, however, usually obtained from a boat. In harbours, bass when hooked often make for old piles and stumps, from which they should be kept, so far as lies in the angler's power.

It should be remembered that bass, like trout, rarely take

It should be remembered that bass, like trout, rarely take a fly unless there is a ripple on the water, and on calm days they should be fished for with live sand-eels or smelts. A strip of skin cut from the belly of the mackerel or bass, one end of which is lashed on to the shank of the hook, is sometimes cast like a fly, and is undoubtedly a good bait. As bass run very large, and are exceedingly strong, I look upon the use of two flies as a great mistake. Two flies do not catch more fish, and they may cause the loss of the best fish of the day. On very rough days, a large fly may be used; and when the ripple is slight, a small Shaldon Shiner will sometimes catch bass when everything else fails. In fishing narrow channels, where the tide runs strongly, on days when the bass do not show themselves, it is sometimes a good plan to let out about 40yds. of line, with a fly or a piece of mackerel-

skin at the end. The boat should be worked backwards and forwards across the tide, dropping lower each time the channel is crossed. The force of the stream takes out the line down the channel, and the fly, or bait, is thus presented to the fish before the boat has gone over them. In trolling for salmon on the Shannon, and other rivers, the boat is usually worked after this fashion. When flies are thus trailed, the boat should be rowed rather fast.

Casting a spinning-bait from the shore is a very deadly

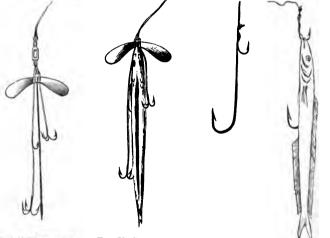


FIG. 49. IMPROVED CHAPMAN SPIN-NER.

FIG. 50. SAND-EEL ON CHAPMAN SPINNER.

Fig. 51. Sand-eel on Ordinaby Trailing Tackle.

method of taking bass. Either the general rod, or the fly rod with short top, may be used; the line must be dressed, and not too stout, and the trace figured on page 31 is very suitable for the purpose. The bait may be a sand-eel—which, by the way, need not necessarily spin—or any small fish, fixed on a Chapman spinner. Another very efficient flight for small fish, but which necessitates the use of a baiting-needle, is a large triangle at the end of a piece of gimp. The needle is hooked in the loop of the gimp, inserted at

the vent of the bait, and brought out at its mouth, and the triangle drawn up to the vent. If the sand-eel is used, it may be placed on two hooks (Fig. 51), or on the Chapman Spinner (Figs. 49, 50). If on the former tackle, the point of the lower hook is put in at the mouth, and carried down until the mouth of the bait touches the upper hook. The lower hook is then brought out through the belly of the fish, and the upper hook is put through its lips. If the lower hook is made with a long shank, which has been softened by heating in a flame, and then bent slightly, a twist will be given to the body of the bait, which will spin.

The method of using this tackle is very similar to that

employed in spinning for jack in fresh water. The angler takes his stand as near the fish as he can get, lets the trace and bait hang loosely from the point of the rod, which he holds in his right hand, resting the butt against his hip. Then he uncoils some line off the reel, and, taking the rod in both hands, casts the bait out in the direction of the fish. The reel-line he holds in his left hand until the moment when the bait is just starting on its voyage through the air; he then releases the line, and the bait flies out any distance from 20yds. to 70yds., according to the expertness of the caster. This method of bass fishing is invaluable to the shore fisher, for it enables him to command a large expanse of water. It is hardly necessary to say, that as soon as the bait touches the water, the angler commences to draw in the line with his left hand (letting it run over the first finger of the right hand), and between each draw moving the rod slightly away from the bait, to keep the latter in constant motion. When all the line is drawn in, a fresh cast is made. There is a method of casting off the reel without uncoiling any line; it is described on page 71. Artificial baits are often used for spinning; among the best are red indiarubber sand-eels, Devon baits, small spoon-baits, Hearder's baby spinners, an imitation sand-eel, made out of a slip of pork-skin, soaked and scraped (see page 36), and a very excellent spinner known as Gregory's Clipper (illustrated on page 29). The natural bait should always be used, when obtainable. In fishing from

a boat, it is not usual to cast out the bait, but to trail it at the end of 30yds. to 40yds. of line. In trailing, or "whiffing," as it is called by professional sea fishermen, a baby spinner, with two ragworms attached by the head to the hook, forms an excellent bait. As bass feed at various depths, it is well to commence fishing the bait near the surface, gradually adding more lead until it sinks to such a depth as to be visible to the fish. The boat should, if possible, be worked across the tide, so that the fish see the bait before the boat has gone over them. The rule as to using small baits in fair weather, and large ones when the waves are high, applies as much to spinning as to fly fishing. Boats under sail frequently put out lines for bass, but the tackle used has to be very strong and heavy, and is not suitable for rod fishing.

Another excellent method of catching bass, though hardly affording the variety or sport incidental to fly fishing and spinning, is fishing with the live sand-eel or sand-smelt. For this purpose professional fishermen use a hand-line, on which light leads are strung and fixed at intervals of two fathoms, terminating with about six fathoms of fine, unleaded line, to which the hook and bait are attached. This tackle is used from a boat moored in a tideway, and the force of the current takes out the unleaded portion of the line, and, to a certain extent, the leaded portion, the amount let out depending in a great measure on the strength of the tide. In very deep water, the nearest approach the angler can make to this method is to use the sea leger described on page 24. but slightly varying it by allowing at least an extra vard of salmon gut or gimp below the lead. In this fishing there is no object in the lead sliding on a length of gimp; and if special tackle is made, it should be fixed; but the leger answers the purpose. If the current is strong, a good deal of line has to be let out to get the bait low enough in the water, and the angler must use his judgment as to the most suitable amount of lead. It is, however, advisable, when drift-line fishing, to have a second rod, on which is a line without sinkers, for it frequently happens that bass will not

feed on or near the bottom, and take the bait within a few inches of the surface. The best baits are live sand-eels, sand-smelts, or ragworms, the latter being a long way behind the former. The hook should be put in at the mouth of the sand-eel or smelt, and out at a small fraction of an inch below its gills. When ragworms have to be used, two or three are strung on to the hook through the head.

The peculiar style of fishing invented by the anglers of Nottingham, which is now finding favour on the Thames, and, indeed, all over the country, has been followed with great success by a few bass fishermen. It is peculiarly suited for fishing from pier-heads and bridges crossing estuaries or the mouths of rivers. The tackle is much the same as that illustrated on page 25, and consists of a single hook on stout salmon gut, a few small bullets, a pear-shaped pike float, and an undressed, twisted, silk line, rather finer than that used for spinning. The check must be taken off the reel (see page 9), and the general rod described on page 5 can be used. The bait may be any of those affected by bass, the living sand-eel standing first: the live sand-smelt is also good, and pilchard guts are excellent. A strip of silvery mackerel-skin may also be used. As a rule, the float is only placed a few feet above the bait, but occasionally it is found necessary to fish deeper. The method of using this tackle is to cast it out to where the fish are feeding, the weight of the float and sinker running the line off the reel; but if the tide will carry the bait to the fish, so much the better. The angler stands holding the rod as if about to cast a spinning bait; but he uncoils no line. His left hand clasps the rod below the reel, the right hand above it, the little finger of the right hand pressing gently on the rim of the reel, and acting as a check to it; at the moment of casting the bait, the pressure of the finger is taken off, to allow the reel to revolve. The art of Nottingham fishing is not learnt in a day, and, as the first few casts are apt to be erratic, the angler will do well to practise in a lonely place. After the float and bait are cast out, the angler can let the tide take them still farther out, if it seems desirable, for the light silk line will run off the reel very quickly and easily. I have found that the top ring described on page 6 greatly facilitates the passage of the line. With Nottingham tackle, float and bait can be cast out from rocky points beyond the surf, worked along the quays, harbour walls; and, as a matter of fact, it is, in skilful hands, by far the most deadly form of float tackle known.

Last of all, we come to ordinary ground fishing, which may be carried on from boats, pier-heads, quays, and bridges. by means of a two-hook paternoster (see page 19), made either of stout salmon gut, double gut, or the fine Patent Gimp already mentioned, which has the advantage of being not only fine and strong, but also impervious to the sharp teeth of bass. The size of hook must, of course, depend upon the description and size of bait used. Live sand-eels, for instance. require a good-sized hook (about No. 12), while the beard of an oyster—a bait used and recommended by Mr. Sachs, a noted sea angler-rather a small one (about No. 8). Pilchard guts are good baits, and so are soft crabs, pieces of squid or cuttle. and a slice from a pilchard. Ground-baiting (see page 45), when it can be carried on, is very advisable, the best ground-bait being a mixture of pilchard refuse and pounded crabs. When the water is not deeper than the length of the rod, a large float may be fixed above the paternoster, and the tide allowed to carry out the tackle and baits. When the angler finds one plan unsuccessful, he should try another, and always choose that method of angling best suited to circumstances and the locality. Where no pier is available, and the bottom is not too foul, the paternoster or leger can be thrown from the shore; but (excepting, of course, the mouths of rivers and quiet estuaries), owing to the wash of the waves, so heavy a lead is usually required to keep out the bait that the rod can rarely be used. At Deal. the tackle described in Chapter IV., page 54, is used for this purpose, and some very good takes of bass are made with it. Pieces of cuttle, squid, or strips of mackerel-skin, on account of their toughness, are good baits for use on tackle which has to be cast any great distance. Casting from the beach is often practised when it is too rough to go affoat.

There is only one other method of catching bass of interest to the angler with which I am acquainted, and I only know of it by repute. It is followed, I believe, off Brixham. The tackle consists of a long, stout, unleaded line, and a No. 3 or 4 Exeter Round bend hook, attached to a short piece of strong snooding. The other end of the snooding is attached to the eye of a baiting-needle, by means of which it is put in at the mouth of the bait (any small fish 5in. or 6in. in length) and out at its tail. The tail has a turn of thread put round it, to keep the bait from slipping up the line; the snooding is attached to the main line, and the tackle is ready. Professionals fish with five or six of these lines, mooring their boats across the tide, at some spot where they expect to meet with bass. The baits are thrown out, fall by their own weight to the bottom, and lie there until taken by the fish. The method is very similar to trolling with the gorge-bait in fresh water for jack, and I have no doubt that ordinary trolling might be practised in the sea with success. hooks should, however, project much farther from the gills of the bait than is usual in jack fishing.

Should the angler feel puzzled with so many different methods to choose from, I would say, first let him study the habits of the fish, and, aided by information from local people, form some idea of the most likely spots on the coast to find them. Having determined this point to his satisfaction, let him consider which plan will enable him, in the most simple manner, to place the bait before the eyes of the bass. If he has a boat at his disposal, and can see the fish sporting in the surf, he will probably try fly fishing. If he fishes from a pier, he may also fly-fish if the bass are visible, paternostering, spinning, or live-baiting if they are feeding on the bottom or in mid-water.

I have treated the subject of bass fishing at length, and in detail, not only because the fish offers an exceptional amount of sport to the angler, but also because several of the methods described are followed in angling for other varieties of fish, and will be referred to hereafter.

CHAPTER VI.

THE POLLACK

(WHITING-POLLACK, WHITING-COLE, AND LYTHE);

THE COALFISH

(RACE, RAUNING-POLLACK, SAITHE, COALSEY, PODLER, PILTOCK, PAR, BILLET, STEDLOCK, CUDDEN, COOTH, SILLOCK, HARBIN).

Appearance—Habits—Food—Coalfish—Methods of Angling for Pollack and Coalfish—Fly Fishing—Spinning and Trailing—Sand-Eels on Float Tackle—Ground Fishing.

the first place in the estimation of the sea angler. Though possessing great strength, which it does not disdain to use, it is not so lively a fighter when hooked as its rival but compensates in a measure for this by its size, dogged perseverance to break the tackle, and wide distribution, being met with in great numbers all round the British coast. In appearance it is not unlike the whiting, but deeper and somewhat different in colour. Its back is olive-brown, paling into a yellowish-white on the belly. When fresh out of the sea, it has handsome, dark, glistening eyes. About 15lb. is a very large fish; specimens have been caught 20lb. weight. Where they run large, the angler may find his take average 3lb. or 4lb. each. Those caught in harbours are, as a rule, quite small.

Pollack are found, as I have said, all round our coasts,

but more particularly where rocks are plentiful. In some respects they resemble trout, haunting rocky headlands which stretch far out to sea, and round which the tide sets strongly. rising to a fly in the evening, and taking both live and dead bait, and natural or artificial spinning baits. Spring affords he best pollack fishing on the South-west coast of England-March, April, May, June; while in Ireland and the North of Scotland large pollack are also caught in September. nany other fish of prey, they seem to follow the herrings. While these are out at sea, few pollack will be found in their asual haunts; but when the herrings enter the sea lochs of the Scotch coast, their pursuers come in after them, and are to be caught in great numbers. In the winter, the greater portion of these fish retire into deep water; but in the spring they come inshore, the small ones leading the way-at least, this is what I have been told by fishermen; but it rather conflicts with a statement that pollack spawn in winter close to the shore. As a matter of fact, they are occasionally caught off pier-heads in winter. Their habits vary a good deal in different localities. A good chart, showing the position of sunken rocks, or a sailor well versed in the subject, is a very useful addition to the outfit of the pollack angler, for many fish will be found haunting sunken reefs at a considerable distance from land. From my angling experiences I should imagine that pollack feed on or near the bottom during the day, hiding in seaweed, and rushing out to seize any unfortunate little fish which passes within reach; and that in the evening they come out from their lairs, and roam about in search of food. Whether this be so or not-and it is difficult either to prove or disprove it-I have generally caught them best in the davtime when my bait has been close to the bottom, and in the evening when it has been in mid-water, or near the top.

The favourite food of pollack must be, I fancy, sand-eels, for they are the bait with which the best sport is obtained; but it must be confessed that pollack do not, as a rule, dwell where sand-eels are plentiful, though occasionally they leave their rocky fastnesses for a short stay on a sandy bottom, where they banquet to their heart's content on the silvery

launce. Sea worms of various kinds they take, but their staple diet is probably small fish.

A word or two now as to the coalfish, called saithe in Scotland, which resembles the pollack in so many respects that I have placed the two in one chapter. They may be distinguished from each other by slight differences of shape and colour. The coalfish is the rounder of the two; the colour of its back varies from dark green to blue; its lateral line and belly are white. Placed side by side, the points in which they differ are easily discernible; but apart, especially when small, the two fish are often mistaken for one another. As will be seen from the heading to this chapter, the coalfish has a large variety of local names. In habits it closely resembles the pollack, and may be angled for in the same fashion. As a matter of fact, people who go out fishing for the one look upon catching some of both as a matter of



FIG. 52. CUDDY FLY.

course. This last remark does not apply to the English Channel, where coalfish are not plentiful. In the North and Northeast they abound, and the angler who fly-fishes in Scotch sea lochs for pollack often finds the number of cuddies, as youthful coalfish are termed locally, so great as to be quite a nuisance. From three to five dozen are sometimes taken in an evening,

not one of them over three-quarters of a pound. In Fig. 52 is shown a good cuddy fly. The wings are grey or white; body, white wool, ribbed with gold tinsel; and the tail, red wool. In Yorkshire cuddies are called parrs. The adult coal-fish, however, is not to be despised, for it grows to a great size, being sometimes taken as heavy as 30lb. It is not such good eating as the pollack, which, when in good condition, fresh, and carefully boiled, is rather better than second-rate cod.

Among the various methods of angling for pollack and

calish I put fly fishing first, for though the largest takes re not, as a rule, made in that way, still the sport obtained very superior, and the angler has to exercise some skill nor to hooking the fish instead of being merely rowed about olding a rod or line, and waiting for the fish to hook lemselves. Fly rod, line, and casts I have already described ee Chapter V.), and I need only here say as to the former, at it must be stiff and strong, and that both line and cast ust be capable of holding a 12lb, fish in his first attempt to m out line. That pollack must be held is a maxim which the a angler cannot learn too soon; there is little or no playing iem. Give a pollack line, and down he goes straight to is lair among rocks and seaweed, and, once there, you may id him, and a portion of your tackle, farewell, at least for at day. It is the rarest thing possible to get a pollack it of his stronghold, unless the water is so shallow that ie fish can be reached with an oar. I only once remember etting a large one out of the seaweed in deep water, and, r the benefit of other anglers who may be some time or 10ther similarly situated, will relate how it happened. Wehad a friend with me-had been spinning, or rather trailing, 1 the North-west coast of Scotland, not far from Cape Wrath. ive or six fish, varying from 3lb. to 10lb, in weight, had been rought on board, when my friend suddenly had his rod dragged most out of his hand, and, before he could recover himself. ie fish was at the bottom, fast and firm as if moored there. was clearly a big fish, so we tried all we knew to get m; but the sweeps were not long enough to reach to the ttom, and rowing the boat round the spot, so as to pull le line from various directions, which is sometimes successful. as of no.avail. Finally I bethought me of a plan which is ied in the Galway river when salmon make for the arch the bridge—a proceeding which usually ends in their eaking the tackle. Having made the boatman understand at I wanted the boat placed right over the fish-a difficult atter, as he understood very few words of English-I sked my friend to lay down his rod, took the line in my ght hand, and pulled as hard as I dared. At the same time, I took a few coils of slack line in my left hand, and after having pulled at the fish for about a minute suddenly let go, at the same instant casting the slack line overboard. For a moment or two nothing happened, and then the line commenced to move slowly through the water—the ruse had succeeded, and the pollack, imagining itself free, was swimming away. Quickly seizing the line, I brought the fish, before he had time to find out his mistake, to the surface, where, after a few desperate struggles, he was gaffed. He was as large as any we took that day.

But to return to fly fishing. The tackle, as I have said, must be strong; indeed, for big fish, salmon gut is not strong enough—it should be double; but for the smaller fish which are usually caught in harbours and off pier-heads, single salmon gut will do. As pollack usually feed near the bottom during the daytime, the fly rod is only useful in the evening. The fly can be cast from the rocks and off pier-heads, but most fish are taken from a boat, which should be rowed within casting distance of rocky points, reefs, and the places where the fish are to be found. When a big pollack takes the fiv. he comes up with a splash, such as a dog would make leaping into the water, and immediately he feels the hook goes straight for the bottom - don't let him get there! Sometimes lazy anglers let out thirty yards or so of line, and trail their flies behind the boat. Pollack and coalfish are often caught this way, as also are bass, mackerel, and, very occasionally, herrings

Spinning, trailing, whiffing, and railing are carried on for pollack and coalfish in much the same manner as described in the chapter on bass. There is, however, one great difference. During the day pollack feed near the bottom, and therefore the line must be heavily leaded. If the fish are not being caught (I am supposing that the tide is right-flowing—and that the angler is on a well-known pollack ground), the fault will probably lie in insufficient leads. By the method I have explained on page 31, leads can be added to the trace ad infinitum. It is a good thing to keep on adding weight until it is found that the hooks catch occasions ally in the bottom. All that is then necessary is to shorte

he line a little, which has the effect of raising the bait a loot or two. This refers to trailing from a boat. If the angler is spinning from rocks, as he very well can, casting out after the manner described in Chapter V., he can fish near the bottom by allowing his bait, when cast out, to sink before commencing to draw it back. Casting from the shore is as useful in pollack as in bass fishing, and is not half so well known as it ought to be.

The best natural bait for spinning is the sand-eel; next. but not far distant, is a young conger about 6in, or 7in. long. It is a most killing bait, and the great success of the red indiarubber sand-eel, as it is called, is no doubt owing to its resemblance to this fish. Neither sand-eels nor other small eels need spin. Both ragworms and lobworms are also used as whiffing baits (see page 29). Any small fish, mounted on a Chapman spinner (see page 29), will take pollack and coalfish, and any glittering or gaudy artificial bait will be found killing. The Clipper bait already mentioned (see page 29) is excellent, but hardly so good as a red phantom minnow, about 4in. long. The indiarubber band hait (see page 29) is also very good. Perhaps the best artificial bait of all is the red indiarubber sand-eel, either with or without a baby spinner at the head. It is usually mounted on one large hook. I find the addition of a large triangle to this bait, mounted on three inches of gimp, a great advantage.

Professional fishermen, and also amateurs, sometimes go pollack fishing in sailing vessels. In that case, success depends principally on the boat going over the right ground, and the lines being sufficiently leaded. As a rule, a lead of one, and sometimes two pounds weight, is necessary, when, I need hardly say, a rod cannot be used. Trailing a bait behind a sailing boat is called reeling, or railing; behind a rowing boat, whiffing. I have preferred to use the fresh-water terms in this book, as the methods described originated in fresh-water angling. A very curious bait is used for pollack in Torbay. It is called the Belgian grub, and consists of a plaster of Paris caterpillar, moulded on the shank of a hook, painted yellow or white, with a red head. Three or four of

these are placed on a line, like a cast of flies, and trailed after the boat, a cut rubber band being placed on the hook of the end grub.

The most deadly way of taking pollack and coalfish is with the living sand-eel, baited and used according to the methods described in the last chapter. In shallow water, float tackle, heavily leaded, can be used; but in deep water, the same tackle, less the float, and with the addition of a vard of gut below the leads, is better. The bait and line are carried out by the force of the tide, and so much line should be let out that the bait is a fourth of the way from the bottom. A knowledge of the depth must first be obtained by sounding. A good deal of judgment is necessary in letting out the line, and practice alone will teach the angler the proper quantity to let out. Where the water is under 20ft. deep, I prefer float tackle, for the float can be put about as far from the lead as the water is deep. This would seem to bring a foot or so of line on the bottom; but, as a matter of fact, directly the float is checked the tide carries out the line below the float, and the bait is lifted several feet. Float tackle can sometimes be very successfully used from the shore, especially if cast out in the Nottingham fashion. Off an ordinary beach or sandy shore no one should dream of casting out tackle for pollack: but where there is an inlet of the sea, with steep hills coming down to the water's edge, and deep water within a few feet of the shore—there, and in such-like places, pollack may often be taken with float tackle. If sand-eels cannot be obtained, two ragworms, hooked through the head, or live shrimps, may be tried, but they are not nearly so good. To keep the shrimps alive, it is necessary to float them in a small wooden box with holes bored in it. They are hooked through the tail. In fishing from pier-heads, when the tide is very slack. it is sometimes a good plan to let out a gut line and hook, without leads of any description, baited with ragworms or sand-eels. The slight tide carries out the bait, and pollack are often taken after this manner. I have already described the drift-lines which are used by professional fishermen for taking bass, pollack, &c. They have no advantage over the tackle

just mentioned, beyond, perhaps, the fact that they bear small leads at every two fathoms, which tell the fisherman how much line he has let out.

Concerning ground-line fishing for pollack and coalfish, there is very little to be added to what has already been said on the subject in Chapters IV. and V. The paternoster is the most useful tackle for the purpose, and the bait may be pilchard entrails, or a piece of pilchard on shank of hook, with the guts on the point. Ragworms and live shrimps are also very good, and mussels will occasionally be taken. In harbours and other places where fish run small, salmon gut will be strong enough; but where big fish are expected, double salmon gut, or the Patent Gimp, will be advisable. Pollack often gorge the bait, so a disgorger will be found necessary. A good one is illustrated on page 33.

Before concluding this chapter, let me repeat that the tackle for pollack and coalfish must be strong and reliable; that the fish must on no account be allowed to dive into the weeds, but be given the butt unmercifully; that the angler can hardly fish too near the bottom in the daytime; and that the living sand-eel is the most deadly bait. I have said nothing as to the sizes of hooks, because they vary so with the bait used and the size of fish expected. The largest hook in the scale shown on page 17 is not too large for a 10lb. pollack; but a smaller hook, if good, will hold him, and more fish will be caught on it than on a large one if a small bait, such as a live shrimp, is used.

CHAPTER VII.

GREY MULLET.

Habits—Food—Various Methods of Surface Angling—Mid-water and Bottom Fishing—Fly Fishing.

F the sea fish sought after by the angler, the grey mullet is probably the most difficult of capture. It is very generally distributed, and, having a great fancy for brackish water, particularly that containing a slight admixture of sewage matter, is to be found in large numbers in harbours, docks, and estuaries. It sometimes grows to 10lb. in weight, or even larger; but the general run is from 1lb. to 3lb. It gives good sport when hooked, and is very good eating. Its natural food seems to be vegetable refuse, worms, and certain kinds of seaweed, particularly that grown on ships' bottoms and wood piles. Shoals of mullet will sometimes follow a ship which is about to be overhauled, right into the dock, working up and down its slimy bottom with their noses. They do not disdain animal matter, but in one point are very particular—the food must be soft. The baits which they will at times take are varied in character, and include gentles, ragworms; peeled, unboiled shrimps; soft, fat pork; thornback's liver, pilchard guts, wasp grubs, bread, paste, boiled cabbage, and green silkweed.

Grey mullet are caught at Southampton, Dover, Jersey, Plymouth, along the coast of the Mediterranean, and in many other places; but there are certain spots where, though very plentiful, they are rarely taken—Oulton Broad, for example—the reason probably being that the right bait has

ot yet been discovered. For one angler who catches grey aullet there are ten who fail; and the failure is often owing o ignorance of a very important fact concerning these fish: hey are so shy, that they usually refuse a bait unless distriuted around is a quantity of food of which the bait seems part; in other words, ground-bait is necessary,

In summer, when the weather is warm, grey mullet are ften found feeding on the surface, but in cold weather they seed deeper. During the winter they sometimes bite well a harbours, a light gut paternoster, with very small hooks, aited with ragworms, being used to take them; but even then round-bait is necessary, and the large fish will not come well n the feed without it. Grey mullet feed very badly in brackish rater, and are more easily caught in the sea near breakwaters, iers, and other structures, round the lower portions of which hey find their food. A good many are taken from Plymouth reakwater.

A very certain method of surface fishing, when the sea is alm, was described by Mr. Collier James, in the Fishing Gazette, bout two years ago. For bait he used the tough, upper crust f a newly-baked, plain, bread bun, prepared by removing the rumb, and cutting the crust in strips about in wide, which ere kept in a covered tin for a few hours to toughen. Vhen baiting, strips \frac{2}{2}in. long were torn off, and the ooks, which were small, given one turn through them. or ground-bait, he had breadcrumbs. His main line as of horsehair, terminated by a length of twisted gut. lo leads were used, and small pieces of cork were attached long the line at intervals. If the fish were not visible, is plan was to row very quietly about spots frequented by 1em. scattering a few breadcrumbs here and there. here were any mullet they would, after the boat had passed. ome up to the surface, and feed on the breadcrumbs, which ere only thrown out to discover the position of the fish. he next thing was to lay out the line (the mullet would, f course, disappear while this was being done), scatter a w breadcrumbs round the baits, and row a distance of hirty or forty yards, paying out the line for that distance.

After a little while, the mullet would again come to the surface, take the bait, and be caught. The principal objec of having a hair line was because no rod was used, hair possessing much elasticity, and therefore greatly favouring the fisherman who plays a fish with his hand. I see no reason why a rod should not be used with this tackle: it would be a decided advantage in striking and playing the fish. Very few corks are necessary for this kind of fishing if the line is fine, and well greased. A well greased line will float for a long time on the surface of the water; quite as well, indeed, as if corks were strung along it. The best grease for the purpose is the kidney fat of a red deer. It is kept at several fishing-tackle shops in London for the dryfly fishermen of Hampshire. Mutton kidney fat, melted with a little pure paraffin, answers very nearly as well; in fact, nearly any grease will do.

A somewhat similar tackle to that just described is used by local anglers at Nice. The main line is of horsehair, tapered to three hairs at the fine end; the hook, which is attached to gut, is small, and the bait, a piece of bread or a ragworm. Along the line, at intervals of 1ft., are a series of corks about the size of peas; the lowest, which is as big as a hazel nut, is about two-and-a-half feet above the bait. A very long rod is used. The angler usually wades in, rod is one hand, hook in the other, and, with a gentle sweep of the arm, casts the bait out beyond the surf.

Once, on Dover pier, I saw a man angling for grey multin a highly artistic manner, which proved successful. He rod was long and light, and his line of twisted silk a trithicker than that used on the Trent for chub, and not quithree times as thick as ordinary sewing thread. At the er of the line was a three-yard length of gut, half as thick salmon gut. He used three small hooks (about No. 10), or at the end of the gut, the others as droppers. There were three tiny cork floats on the line, and no sinkers. The sketch (Fig. 5 shows their position and appearance. The end hook I baited with the green weed found on piles in harbours, to others with paste made from stale bread. The day was qui

calm, and the fish could be seen. He cast his tackle a few yards off the fish, in such a way that the tide gradually worked the baits over them, a handful of breadcrumbs being first thrown into the water to bring them on the feed. Fishing from a height, the line above the corks was easily kept from sinking. If the same tackle was used from a boat, the line would have to be greased. I do not think better tackle than this can possibly be devised for surface fishing for mullet in summer. As these fish play strongly, and must not be held tightly, having delicate mouths, from which the hook easily breaks away, it is advisable to have not less than 60yds. or 70yds. of running line. The point which the angler has to aim at in this kind of fishing is to get the ground-bait and tackle over the fish, at the same time keeping as far away from them as possible. Any noise or splashing of oars wil



FIG. 53. GREY MULLET SURFACE TACKLE.

to a certainty frighten grey mullet, as they are particularly susceptible to sound. For instance, when gunnery practice is being carried on from Dover Castle, it is rarely any good fishing for mullet from the Admiralty Pier.

A word more as to baits, and this portion of the subject is complete. Common flour paste is not a good bait, ordinary soaked bread being far better. The bread cannot be too wet, or the bait too soft, so long, of course, as it will stop on the hook. Very small portions should be used, not much larger than a pea. Boiled and unboiled shrimps and prawns, peeled, are useful baits when the angler can use the chervin ground-bait described on page 45. Pilchard guts are also very good, the angler ground-baiting with the same substance chopped up very small. When one thing fails, another should be tried. As a general ground-bait, pounded crabs are decidedly good. To speak of substances thrown on the water, which

are intended to keep the fish near the surface, and lull their suspicions, as ground-bait, is, strictly speaking, incorrect; but anything in the way of fish food other than the hookbait, thrown in by the angler, is usually so termed, and I see no reason to invent new expressions for the purposes of this book.

Fishing for grey mullet on the bottom, or at mid-water, does not require a lengthy description. In harbours and quiet waters generally, very light tackle should be used; the gut fine, but not fine drawn; and the float a porcupine quill, tipped with red paint, and so weighted with split shot, placed lft above the hook, that only the red tip of the float is showing above the water. Any fine silk running line will do. A large variety of baits and ground-baits have already been given. Among the best for harbour fishing are ragworms and peeled, unboiled shrimps. If there is any current, the ground-bait should be placed in a small net, with a stone or two, and let down into the water with a cord, the tackle being placed about two yards below it, so that the stream washes the ground-bait by the hook. When it can be managed, the net should not be used, but the ground-bait cast in loose.

Grey mullet, as I have said, sometimes feed on the surface, sometimes on the bottom. They also often feed at mid-water, working up and down piles which are covered with weed, rooting in it with their noses. For mid-water fishing a small float is advisable; but when this, after a careful trial, fails, the angler should try fishing on the bottom. He may then either leger with bread paste, or place his float a foot farther from the hook than the water is deep (a plummet for testing the depth is shown on page 34). The hook link of gut will then lie on the bottom. He should use ground-bait, and strike at the slightest movement of the float. A paternoster of fine gut, with small hooks, can be used instead of float tackle, and in quite still water it is sometimes cast in without the lead.

Our foreign friends, who in most matters piscatorial are far behind us, have rather the advantage of us in mullet fishing I have already described how mullet are caught at Nice and other places in the Mediterranean. At San Sebastian an elaborate ground-bait is made of chopped heads of sardines, potatoes, and clay, squeezed into balls. Immediately this is thrown in, the hook, baited with a very small square of salted tunny, follows, and good sport is obtained.

Fly fishing for grey mullet in the daytime, though it is often tried, is rarely successful. The fish will follow a fly, but will rarely seize it. At night the fly fisher stands a better chance, and will now and again take a few fish on a white moth. The dressing of a night fly for mullet was described in the following letter, published in the Fishing Gazette of June 18, 1887:—

"Sir,—I believe there are some rivers—generally shallow ones—in which mullet will not take a bait. With regard to flies, I have taken some mullet at night with a silver-bodied moth: wing, owl's feather; hackle, white; tail, a bit of kid or wash leather. The body should be first wrapped with wool, to make it fat, and the tinsel wound over it.

"In the Gazette of September 3, 1881, Mr. J. D. Dougal says that 'a man used to take them on the Clyde with a white fly, on the hook of which he put the bivalved oval spout fish, called on the Clyde Garrocher, the scientific name being Mya arenaria. Part of the flesh of this—probably the spout, which is exceedingly tough—he put on his fly. He angled at low water, and took numbers, from 3lb. to 5lb. each.'

"I think this plan would be worth a trial where the Mya arenaria can be got, and I believe it is common on the British coast.

"I am, &c., E. Gosling.

"Aberffraw, Anglesey, June 13."

A gentle placed on a hook might be cast as a fly with success, provided a few gentles were thrown among the fish, to make them feed on that bait. I have not tried the experiment.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MACKEREL.

Habits — Whifing and Trailing — Fishing from a Boat at Anchor—What Not to Do.

HIS fish is good to catch, to eat, and to look at, and therefore takes a high place in the angler's estimation. It is so well known that any description would be superfluous. It abounds on the coasts of the more Southern portions of these isles, and is found, but in less quantities, in the North. Some millions are caught annually in nets and on lines; but enough and to spare are left to meet the requirements of anglers. Formerly, mackerel were supposed to leave our shores during the winter months, and migrate to some unknown region in the North; but it seems probable that they merely retire into deeper water during the cold weather, for they are now taken off the British coast at all seasons of the year. The angler, however, if well advised, will not trouble to seek them in winter, and will probably obtain his best sport during the hottest months of summer.

Mackerel feed at various depths, but are mostly taken within a few feet of the surface, when feeding on shoals of small fry, called "brit" or "bret" in Devonshire, and "mint" at Hastings. Sometimes they come so close to the shore that the fishermen run out a seine net and inclose thousands at one haul. On a hot, sunny day, they may be seen breaking the surface, and capital sport may then be obtained by casting gaudy flies among them from a boat, or from the shore if they are near enough. The fish run

about 1½1b. to 21b. in weight, so that very strong tackle is not necessary; what is known as stout lake gut is quite strong enough. If salmon gut is used, the fish can be dragged in quicker, and a larger take will be made, unless the wind is light, when most fish will be taken on the finer tackle. The cast should be 3yds. long, and two or three flies may be used. The extra flies are called droppers, and are best attached to the line according to the method shown in the diagram (Fig. 54). The fly for cuddy, with a thinner body, answers admirably for mackerel. If

the fish do not take the fly well, cut from the side of a mackerel a thin strip of skin, about $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. in length and $\frac{1}{2}$ in., or a little more, in width. Remove the tail fly from the cast, put in its place a No. 13 hook, and pass the point through one end of the strip of skin (see page 40). The bait should be cast and worked, like a fly, in little jerks, which gives it the resemblance of



Fig. 54. Method of Fastening Droppers on to Fly Lines.

a small fish struggling to escape from its pursuers. The strip of skin is sometimes called a "last," or "lask," and should not be cut straight down the side of the fish, but in a slanting direction, so that half is belly skin-silver-and half side skin-blue. It is the best of all baits for mackerel, whether cast as a fly or trailed after a boat. Mackerel fishermen often carry a wine cork or bung, on which they lay the last, and then stick the point of the hook through it. Beyond referring the reader to the remarks on fly fishing and tackle in Chapters II. and V., I need only add that, if the fish disappear below the surface, the angler, if he has no whiffing or spinning tackle with him, should add a light lead at the junction of the main line with the cast, and, letting out about 30vds, of line, trail his flies, at the rate of three miles an hour, until he falls in with another shoal of fish. If they are feeding on the surface, he may take off the lead and cast for them as before; but if they do not show themselves, he should continue rowing backwards and

forwards over the spot where they seem to be. It is more desirable to row across than with or against the tide, as by so doing the line does not follow quite in the wake of the boat. A spinning bait, or the "last," rigged on a lightly-leaded trace, and cast out into a shoal, after the manner described in Chapter V., answers quite as well as fly fishing. The bait may be natural or artificial—a small spoon, Hearder's Baby spinner, a silver Devon minnow—in fact, anything lively in motion and bright in appearance.

Next comes the question, What is the angler to do if no shoals of mackerel are visible? In that case, he must invoke the assistance of an experienced local fisherman, who will take him to the spots frequented by the fish, which spots, by the way, vary with the season, being nearer shore in July and August than in the colder months. Once on the mackerel ground, the boat is sailed or rowed across the tide until the fish are met with, when it is kept moving, as long as possible, through the shoal. The spinning tackle used in bass fishing answers admirably for mackerel, but for fishing from a rowing boat, it need not be so strong. When under sail it is not usual to bring the boat to to land every fish; and to haul a 2lb. mackerel up to the side of a boat which is going through the water at three or four miles an hour requires fairly strong tackle-good salmon gut is usually strong enough. Rods are not much used in mackerel fishing from sailing vessels; still, where the boat is travelling slowly, and the fish are near the surface, they have their advantages. The constant hauling in of thick, wet, sea lines with the hands is, to my mind, a thing to be avoided on all possible occasions. But there are timeswhen the fish are feeding deep down, and 2lb., 3lb., and even 5lb. leads are used-when the rod must be laid aside. Hand-line tackle for railing or whiffing is illustrated in the chapter on tackle, at page 32. In fishing from a rowing boat, a lead of loz. (unless the line is very coarse) will generally be found quite heavy enough; but if the trace is made according to the principle described on page 31, other leads can be added, if necessary. When the fish are not found at one depth, other depths should be tried. About

thirty yards of line is quite enough to let out behind the boat—in fact, a shorter line will occasionally lead to more fish being caught, as winding in a great length of line often consumes valuable time. The only respects in which spinning or trailing tackle for mackerel differs from that used for bass is in being finer, and in the length of gut below the lead being longer—2yds. to 5yds. in length. A cloudy sky is generally considered best for mackerel fishing, but a bright day will answer nearly as well, if the angler's tackle is fine.

I have already described what is commonly considered the best trailing bait-the "last"; but I am inclined to think that a sand-eel, baited as shown on page 28, Fig. 27, or cut in half just before being dropped into the water, the head half only being used, is nearly as good. Any bit of fish-skin will do, if bright, and not too stiffe.g., a piece cut from a gurnard. When using any baits of this character, unless the fish are biting freely, it is well to jerk the line slightly every minute or so, an action which gives a very life-like motion to the piece of fish-skin. artificial baits which mackerel will take are legion. Anything that spins, is bright or highly coloured, and not too large, they will rush at eagerly. When unprovided with bait—a not infrequent occurrence—a strip of handkerchief is sometimes placed on the hook, to be replaced by the "last" immediately a mackerel is caught. A piece of clay pipe stem on the hook shank is much believed in by some fishermen. If the Devon minnow is used, it is best to have it either all silver or all gold, and to have the hooks mounted on fine gimp. It is ordinarily made with four triangles of hooks; but these are too many for mackerel fishing. A couple of hooks, lashed ogether at the tail, and a triangle on each side, will be found more than sufficient—in fact, the latter may be dispensed with. If a number of triangles are used, too much time is lost in unhooking the fish.

It is asserted by fishermen, that when two lines are out, and mackerel are hooked on each, both fish should not be hauled in at once, but that one fish should be left out for the shoal

to follow, until the other is taken off the line, and the hook—rebaited if necessary—returned to the water. The natural supposition would be that the struggles of a hooked fish would alarm its companions; but fish are incomprehensible things, and there may be something in the idea. It is a well-known fact that perch and chub will follow a hooked brother to the very side of the boat; and there are instances on record of jack, trout, and salmon, when in pairs, having suffered by their devotion for a dying comrade, by meeting an inglorious death in the landing-net or on the gaff.

The methods already described are those most commonly in use; but during the months of August, September, and October, mackerel may be fished for with some success from a boat at anchor. The best bait is a small live sand-eel, and the tackle is similar to that used for pollack, a description of which is given in Chapter VI. It is, of course, made up finer, as the fish are smaller. If the sand-eels run large, they should be cut in half. When fishing for pollack and bass with sand-eels, the angler may sometimes find his hook robbed of the bait in an inexplicable manner. When this happens, a very small sand-eel, or half a large one, should be put on the hook, and shortly afterwards a shining mackerel will very likely be lifted over the side. In ground fishing for mackerel the bait should, as a rule, be kept near bottom. If the water is deep, no float can be used; but if the depth is 20ft. or less, a float is an advantage. The depth should always be taken before commencing to fish, and the line adjusted accordingly. If the fish are not found near the bottom, other depths should be tried. Off the Channel Islands. many mackerel are caught in this way at night, particularly when it is moonlight. If sand-eels cannot be obtained, pilchard guts should be used. It is not a bad plan to run a piece of squid up the shank of the hook, and put some pilchard gut on the point. Failing these baits, there are ragworms and mussels; but they are not nearly so good. and I am inclined to think that the beard of an oyster would be better. If the tide runs strongly, a strip of mackerel skin may be tried, cut, and placed on the hook in the manner

already described, and worked vigorously in the water, to make it as life-like as possible.

When mackerel are close in shore, during the early autumn, they may often be taken from pierheads and in harbours in the manner just described, and more during the night than the day. In these positions ground-bait should be used, pilchard or herring refuse being the best. It can be let down in a net close to the bait, and the cord shaken occasionally.

American mackerel fishermen use ground-bait largely, having mills in which herrings are pounded up for the purpose. When the mackerel have been attracted together, a bright metal fish, well armed with hooks, is let down among them and jigged about; it is eagerly taken by the fish.

So much, then, for what to do. A few lines on what not to do, and the chapter is at an end. Do not, when yachting with a friend, and his beautiful craft is making her eight knots an hour—do not then get out the spinning rod, and a trace bearing a ½oz. lead, and patiently sit watching your spoonbait skip from wave-top to wave-top, as the yacht dashes through the water. Rather, if your friend wants a fish or two, induce him to shorten sail and to take a very slow turn across the tide, you, meanwhile, having either put a ½lb. lead on your trace, or prepared a hand-line, bearing a lead weighing 1lb. or more, according to the pace at which the yacht is going. On meeting with fish, change the artificial for a "last," and sail through the shoal backwards and forwards as long as possible. If your friend won't reduce sail at your request, some good may be done with a very strong hand-line and a 5lb., or even heavier, lead.

CHAPTER IX.

SOME OTHER SEA FISH.

Braize—Bream—Brill—Chad—Cod—Conger—Dab—Dogfish—
Dory—Flounder—Garfish—Gurnard—Haddock—Hake—
Halibut—Herring—Horse Mackerel—Ling—Plaice—Poor
Cod—Red Mullet—Sea Trout—Skate—Smelt—Sole—Turbot
—Whiting—Whiting Pout—Wrasse.

N preceding chapters I have described at length, and in detail, various methods by which bass, pollack, grey mullet, and mackerel—the four fish most highly esteemed by the angler—are to be captured, and have also devoted a chapter to sea fishing and angling generally. By the methods described, with a few slight modifications, almost any of the fish which are found on our coasts may be caught, and therefore, in running quickly through a number of British sea fish, I propose to make my remarks as concise as possible. and to avoid needless repetition. Should the reader be in doubt as to how to set about catching any of the fish described, -a state of things which it will be my duty to prevent as far as possible—I would advise him to read carefully the earlier chapters, and, instead of endeavouring to find instructions and to copy them to the smallest detail-in other words, to fish by rule of thumb-let him rather obtain general ideas on the subject, and apply them with what modifications circumstances may make necessary. Given a piece of salt water containing a certain kind of fish—the problem being how to catch them—the first thing to do is to consider what bait they will take, and, secondly, the best means of placing

that bait before them. With reference to the first point, the experience of others must be the guide; but as to the other. the angler having determined at what depth the fish probably are, must so arrange his tackle that the bait reaches them. For instance, in shallow water the float tackle can be used. heavily leaded if the tide be strong, lightly if it be slack. If the fish are bottom feeders, the float must be arranged so as to bring the bait on the bottom, or the leger, or paternoster with lowest hook close to the lead, may be used. For very deep water heavy leads are necessary, and for deep water combined with a strong tide, very heavy leads. As a matter of fact, everything depends on circumstances, which vary with the season and locality; and the man who has not the intelligence to adapt his tackle and methods of fishing to circumstances, need never expect to become an angler. Apologising for this slight digression. I have only to add that, for convenience of reference, the fish in this chapter are arranged alphabetically.

The Braise or Becker.—This fish is a member of the bream family, and is not taken in large quantities on our coasts. Its back is blue, sides and belly silvery. It feeds both on the bottom and in mid-water, and, as it has a partiality for mussels and ragworms, is sometimes taken by pout and whiting fishers on their paternosters or hand-lines. It is not often specially fished for.

The Bream, Chad-bream, Brim, or Red Gilt-head.—
The sea bream is a large, handsome fish, somewhat prickly to handle, and poor to eat. It is found all round our coasts in large numbers, but is most abundant off Sussex, Devon, and Cornwall. The largest fish, weighing five or six pounds, are, as a rule, only caught so far out at sea that the depth of water renders angling impossible. Hand-lines with heavy leads are generally used, the bait being kept two or three feet from the bottom. Where the water is not too deep, bream may be taken on the rod with paternoster tackle, but in shallow water it is almost useless to angle for any but very small fish during the day. In deep water, when there is little light, and where semi-darkness prevails, they will bite at all times. The baits

for bream are sand-eels-which are best of all-pieces of pilchard or herring, mussels, or ragworms. Mr. Wilcocks particularly recommends the soft part of a limpet. In cutting the bait, a small portion of the hard part is retained, through which the point of the hook is put to keep the bait in position. The hook should be any size between No. 12 and No. 15. according to the bait used, and the run of the fish. Groundbait is very desirable, placed in a net and sunk, as already described. Pilchard guts are best for this purpose, but, failing these, other mixtures may be tried. The young of bream are called chads, and, during the summer months, are taken in large numbers with the rod and line from piers, in harbours. and off the coasts of Devon and Cornwall. The best tackle is the paternoster; the best baits, ragworms and pilchard guts. The ground-bait net should always be used. The bream feeds at various depths. The bottom should be tried first, then midwater, and even nearer still to the surface; but for this the paternoster is no use, unless a large float is put on the line just above the gut length, and the tackle allowed to be carried out by the tide. Care should be taken that the net is at the same depth as the hooks, and that the ground-bait is washed from it to the hooks. Most bream are caught during the summer months.

The Brill.—This well-known flat fish is very rarely taken by the amateur sea fisherman, unless he is the owner of a trawl net. They frequent banks, and will take a large variety of baits, especially sand-eels and smelts.

Chad are the young of the sea bream.

The Cod.—This most valuable food fish now and again falls a victim to the angler, more often, indeed, than is generally supposed. Only a few days back I read in a paper devoted to angling and anglers, that during the week three fine cod of eighteen, twenty, and twenty-eight pounds, were landed from the pier at Ilfracombe. The places where codfish of this size can be taken from the shore are very few and far between. For these big fish very strong tackle is generally used, but if a salmon of twenty or thirty pounds can be killed.

on a single strand of gut, I do not see why anything stronger should be necessary for cod. Squid is, undoubtedly, the best bait, though pilchard, sprat, sand-eel, and herring are all good; whelks can be tried if the other baits are not obtainable. The hooks should be No. 19, or even larger, for the cod likes a good mouthful, and usually disdains anything small. Paternoster or leger tackle is as good as any, and if hand-lines are being used in very deep water, the Kentish rig, described at end of Chapter IV., of suitable strength with large hooks, answers admirably. Off the North coast of Scotland, large numbers of cod are caught on hand-lines, but in the English Channel the most the angler must expect are codlings. Still, as I have said, there are places—Ilfracombe, for instance—where a fair number of large cod are caught from the shore during the year.

The Conger is a marine eel, and the largest of its kind. It grows to an immense size, and I have heard of them being taken over a hundred pounds in weight. When at Ilfracombe, me winter, I saw the upper half of a conger brought in by two fishermen. The fish was so strong and large that they were unable to get the whole of it into their boat, and were breed to cut it in half, and let the tail portion drop back nto the sea. From the weight of the portion brought in, it eemed likely that the eel would have weighed about a hundred ounds. I saw no reason to disbelieve their story, as a fish f that weight would be immensely strong. Anglers from piers nd jetties rarely catch conger over six or seven pounds weight, o that the tackle required need not be extraordinarily coarse. I paternoster, or leger made of stout gimp, is advisable, and etween the hooks and the main line should be a swivel (see age 23). It is not a bad plan to lay out a conger line when ngling for other fish. Gimp cannot be knotted to an eyed ook. The best plan is to put in. of the gimp through the ye, and then lash it strongly to the shank of the hook with vell-waxed thread or hemp. Conger rarely take a bait during he daytime, except in very deep water, where the light ardly penetrates. They are not often found on a sandy or auddy bottom, their home being among rocks. To get really

good takes of these eels, it is necessary to fish off a rocky coast, such as that of Cornwall or the North of Scotland. Angling in the ordinary sense of the word is out of the question, for extremely strong tackle has to be used to dislodge the fish from their strongholds, where they often manage to retire on being hooked. Stout ordinary ground-lines are used the Kentish rig (see Chapter IV.) being as good as any. The hooks for this fishing must be strong in the wire, and of considerable size, not less than half as large again as the largest hook figured on page 17. On the length of snooding, between the hook and the spreader, should be one very strong brass swivel. Unless the bottom is sand, the baits are fished near, but not on, the bottom. I need hardly say that, fishing for big congers being nearly always done from a boat, a fisherman who knows the marks of the best grounds must accompany the amateur. The best sport is obtained on dark nights. Though a voracious fish, the conger is rather particular in his baits-they must be soft and fresh. Squid is probably the best, being closely followed by pilchards, sprats, herrings, and mackerel. The principal bones should be taken out of fish baits, and squid should be beaten to make it tender. A very strong gaff is necessary to land a conger, and the fish should be stunned by repeated blows on the head and near the tail with a short staff kept for the purpose. Never hold up a congeror, indeed, any other eel — by the line. The portion of the fish which is eatable is from the neck downwards for few inches. In the hands of a skilful cook much can be done with it, and it has been whispered that there are vendors of real turtle soup who make large purchases of sea eels.

The Dab is a small, flat fish, found in most of our harbours estuaries, and sheltered bays, of which the bottom is sand of mud, and, indeed, on most sandy bottoms round our coasts. It is often mistaken for the flounder, but may be known by being rough on the back and clear looking. Dabs are excellent eating, especially in the spring, when they are in their best condition. The tackle to use for them is the leger; the gut may be fine, and the hook about No. 7 or No. 8

Lugworms; peeled, unboiled shrimps; and mussels, are the best baits, and ragworms are also taken freely.

The Dogfish is the bête noir of the hand-line fisher. In shape it is like a small shark. It has a spine in its tail, which inflicts a nasty and sometimes a poisonous wound. It takes any bait, is absolutely worthless when caught, and no one dreams of fishing for it. Large ones drive other fish away.

Dory.—This curious-looking fish is not often taken by the angler. It is, in shape, somewhat like a flat fish set on edge, has a lantern-jawed kind of head, and is of a golden olive-brown colour. It takes a live bait, and also a spinning bait, but the latter rarely. It is never specially fished for, but when one is seen, an endeavour should be made to catch it, for it is most excellent eating. The best plan is to put any small live fish on a hook, and get it, by float-tackle or drift-line, in front of the dory, which will probably take it.

The Flounder is a flat fish, usually of small size, which is found mostly in harbours and estuaries, and sometimes pushes its way up into perfectly fresh water. Of late years a number have been placed in the Thames by the Thames Angling Preservation Society, above Teddington, where they appear to do well. Many are taken in the Canterbury Stour, where the water is not even brackish. They may be known from the dab by their smooth backs, and they lack the clear appearance of their little cousin. Leger tackle, with two or more hooks, is best suited for them, and the best baits are soft crab, ragworms, shrimps, and lugworms. The first-named is to be preferred. In fresh or brackish water they take earthworms. They are in best condition during the winter and early spring.

The Garfish, Sea Pike, Longnose, Snipe Eel, or Sea Needle, is a long, slender fish, of greenish hue, with a bill not unlike that of a snipe, along which are rows of sharp teeth. It is a deep-sea fish, but comes inshore during the summer, and is usually found with shoals of mackerel. It is taken with mackerel lines and baits. Though edible, it is not good eating. It varies in length from 18in. to 4ft., and is a fine bait for whiting.

Gurnard, or Gurnet.—There are two common varieties of this fish, the red and the grey. They may be known by their large, square-shaped heads, which are out of all proportion to their bodies, and large, spinous dorsal fins. They are very abundant round our coasts, and will take almost any bait. They are to be caught near the bottom with paternoster tackle, and also with mackerel tackle and baits. They do not run very large, and are fairly good eating. They are mostly taken when whiting fishing.

Haddock.—These fish are too well known to need description. They are plentiful off the East Coast and round Scotland, but are found on all the shores of the United Kingdom. They swim in large shoals, and are uncertain in their feeding grounds, frequently shifting their position, probably in search of food. About two or three pounds is the common weight, but they have been taken as heavy as fourteen pounds. They are fished for near the bottom with the paternoster or hand-line tackle, and mussels are the standard baits; pilchards, sprats, mackerels, and herrings are also good, and a hook baited with squid and tipped with a mussel is considered very killing.

The Hake is a voracious fish, which follows and levies toll upon shoals of pilchards and herrings. It is not often taken by the amateur fisherman, who, if he would go a "haking," must make friends with the crew of a pilchard boat, and join them on one of their expeditions, for, as the hake follows the pilchards, these two fish can be captured at the same timewhile the lines are out for the one, drift nets are out for the other. Hake vary from about four to fourteen pounds in weight, and require strong tackle. The hook should be three times as large as the largest in the scale given in this book, and must be mounted on gimp, for the hake has many and sharp teeth. The fishing is nearly always done at night, and is generally unsuccessful during the day. A very heavy paternoster can be used with a rod, but one hook will be found quite sufficient. The best bait is a whole pilchard. The professional fishermen, of course, use hand-lines of various patterns, of which one is as good as the other, the chief point being to have the right weight of lead so that the fish may see the bait. Hake feed at various depths, and if not met with near the bottom, the line should be shortened. They are very fair eating, and more generally appreciated than was the case a few years back. They visit all our coasts, but are more abundant off Devon, Cornwall, and the South-west of Ireland than elsewhere.

The Halibut is an immense, flat fish, which attains the weight of five hundred pounds. It is caught more frequently in the North than off the South coast. As a rule, it takes a large fish, which has previously been hooked, and more often than not it goes off with the fisherman's lines. Some friends of mine, fishing for cod in the North of Scotland, got hold of a halibut, which towed the boat about for an hour: but. finally, they brought him to the surface. They then tried to improve their hold by sticking the hooks of other lines into him, but his hide was too hard for that. Finally, while they were endeavouring to get a noose round him-their idea being. I suppose, to tow him ashore—the boat lurched, the line broke, and the halibut lived to fight another day. In The Field of July 9, 1881, was recorded the capture of a halibut weighing kwt. It was caught on a line set for cod, and had taken a od weighing 2lb. If anyone is inclined to fish for these nonsters, let him use strong tackle, large hooks, and a whole quid, or any good-sized fish, as bait.

Herring. — This well-known fish is not often sought after by the angler, but I mention it here because, in some places, it takes a white fly well, and affords excellent sport. In Strangford Lough, Co. Down, Ireland, many herrings are aken in this way. The same thing occurs occasionally in the office of the Scotch sea lochs.

The Horse Mackerel, or Scad, is taken incidentally when ingling for other fish, particularly mackerel and pollack. It s poor eating, and has two spines on the belly, near the tail, which it knows how to use to the best advantage. It is sometimes taken when angling from piers or the shore with a paternoster, but is more often caught further out.

The Ling is an ugly, badly-proportioned fish, which, to the casual observer, has the appearance of being a cross between a cod and a conger. It will take any good-sized bait, and is by no means difficult of capture. Ling are caught on conger and cod lines, take the same baits, and are fished for in the same manner. They prefer a rocky bottom to any other, are found all round our coasts, and abound off Cornwall, the Scilly Isles, and some parts of Ireland.

Plaice.—Small specimens of this well-known flat fish are often taken by the dab or flounder fisher, but the larger fish are found at some distance from the coast. They like a sandy or muddy bottom, and the usual baits are ragworms, lugworms, or shrimps raw or boiled. I have caught several large ones when baiting with mussels. Plaice of three pounds give fine sport on light tackle. When plentiful, they are well worth fishing for. Leger tackle should be used, with No. 12 hooks.

Power, Poor Cod, Pouting, White Eyes, or Gilligant.—A small member of the cod family, only a few inches in length. It abounds off the coast of Devonshire, and large numbers are taken by persons fishing for whiting and pout. The best bait is the ragworm.

The Red Mullet, or Surmullet, is not often caught by the angler. It is found principally on the South and Southeast coasts of England during the summer, and is taken on lines, in much the same places as smelts, and with the same baits. The large majority of the limited number which fall victims to hooks and lines are taken on trots, or spillersthe sea fisherman's equivalent of the poacher's night-line. I imagine that few salt-water anglers ever fish specially for red mullet, they are so rarely caught. Among the baits which they are recorded to have taken are lugworms, varm-the sea tapeworm, found in the Channel Islands by digging under rocks, close to low water mark-slips of fresh sardine or bits of squid (in the Mediterranean), a slip from the tail of a cavally (at St. Vincent, Cape de Verde), and ragworms. mullet are not often taken over 14in. or 15in. in length, fine gut tackle should be used, the same as I have advised for

smelt fishing. Mullet caught in nets sometimes run much larger.

The Sea Trout.—For the first time this fish is included in a work on sea fishing, and I include it for the simple and sufficient eason that it is occasionally caught in the sea, and that sea-trout fishing in salt water is a recognised branch of ingling. Naturalists and writers on angling have, from time time, been involved in discussions as to the number of varieties of migratory trout. Personally, I incline to the view that the number of species is very limited, and that several so-called species owe their existence to careless observers, who, on seeing a sea trout differing slightly in appearance from his brothers—a difference brought about, in all probability, either by some peculiarity in his food or surroundings—at once imagine that they have found a new species. I am not sure whether such fish may even be termed new varieties, for under different circumstances they quickly lose their peculiarities, and come out ordinary sea trout. A barren hen ofttimes puts on cock's plumage, but she is none the more a new variety or new species. These remarks seem to me necessary because the reader of this book may find himself considerably puzzled by the various names given to the sea trout in different places. For the purposes of this work, I include in the term sea trout all those kinds which, following the example of salmon, live in the sea, and only come into our rivers to deposit their eggs and increase their species.

It is while sea trout are waiting in bays and inlets of the sea, for a rise of water in the rivers to enable them to ascend to their spawning grounds, that they are to be caught by the salt-water angler. The best bait is a dead sand-eel, which may merely be dragged along, or be given a brilliant spin by being mounted on a Chapman spinner, without lead on the spike, and with rather small fans (see Fig. 26, page 28). Two triangles are sufficient, one near the shoulders of the bait, the other close to the end of its tail, but opposite to the shoulder triangle a single hook should be lashed, which is merely used to stick in the bait,

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so that the pull on each side is equal. The Chapman spinner (shown on page 27) frequently requires some little modification to adapt it to the shapes of various baits. (see page 30), and also the mounting of the spinner, should be of ordinary salmon gut, and the lead should be, as a rule, light, not more than loz, in weight. Occasionally, sea trout feed near the bottom, when heavier leads should be used. This fishing is usually done from a boat near the mouths of rivers. The bait is trailed about thirty yards or more behind, and the boat should be rowed rather quickly. Sea trouting is not at all confined to a short season, for, from early spring to late autumn, the fish are running up, or waiting to run up, rivers. In the South of England it is rather an unusual thing for sea trout to take a bait in salt water: but in the North of Scotland, and notably the Kyles of Durness and Tongue, many fish are taken this way. Sea trout are so little sought after in salt water that I am quite sure there are many bays and sea lochs, especially in the North of Scotland, which have not yet been fished, where first-rate sport may be had. As sand-eels are not easy to obtain, the angler should provide himself with some artificial baits. I have found small Devon minnows (silver, with a little transparent paint of a golden-brown colour on the back), and "halcyons," as good as any. The latter are practically Alexandra flies, fitted with a pair of fans to make them spin. As a matter of fact, sea trout will take almost anything in motion which is not too large, and glitters. In fresh water I have what may be termed the bad taste to prefer fly fishing for sea trout, to salmon or any other kind of fishing, and I incline to the opinion that, in salt water, where plentiful and on the feed, no fish afford better sport.

As sea trout and salmon do not generally ascend rivers, except in times of flood, it follows that during a long drought a large number of fish collect at the mouths of rivers, and the success of the salt-water angler is then greatest. The fish sometimes take the bait best when the water in the rivers is just beginning to rise, and they are working up close to the river's mouth.

The Skate.—The skate, with its first cousins, the thornback and homelyn, finds place among those fish which are not specially angled for, but which come to bag now and again when whiting or conger fishing. They are large, flat fish, are found on sandy and muddy bottoms, and have a liking for sand-eels, but will take most fish baits.

Smelt and Sand-Smelt. — These delicate little fish, which are found mostly in harbours and sheltered bays with sandy bottoms, are easily caught in numbers with the rod and line. I have already said all that need be said on the subject on pages 44 and 52, to which the reader is referred.

Sole.—This admirable flat fish is not often taken by the angler. It comes to hand occasionally when night fishing with the sea leger (see page 24) on those muddy, oozy bottoms, in which most flat fish delight. Lugworms are the best bait. Any reader of this book possessing influence, either with sea fishermen or our rulers, will do a national service if he uses that influence to prevent the taking of immature soles—a practice which is slowly destroying our sole fisheries.

Turbot. — A very limited number of my readers are likely to catch turbot. These fish are found on banks well known to the fishermen, and, when the spring trawling is over, are sought after in rather deeper water with hooks and lines. Smelts, sand-eels, herrings, and other fish baits are used, but the turbot shows a decided preference for live baits, and on this account the Dutch fishermen, who do an immense amount of turbot fishing, bait their lines with lamperns, which are very tenacious of life. The hooks for turbot should be large and strong. Turbot are not always fished for close to the bottom, though that is their general feeding-place.

Whiting.—Whiting are indescribably numerous all round our coasts, and are taken in large numbers both by anglers and professional fishermen. The general size is a pound or a little more, but in some places they reach several pounds in weight. Mr. Wilcocks says that the finest run of whiting he ever saw caught averaged not more than two pounds. They are usually found on sandy banks, at a depth of from

ten to about thirty fathoms, and, like most fish, prefer shallow water in summer. Small ones are often caught off pier-heads, but the larger fish are nearly always taken in deeper water. Whiting are in the markets all through the year, but they hardly come within approachable distance of the angler until the spring. The largest and best-conditioned fish are caught in the summer and autumn. Visitors to South coast watering places, who are taken short distances out to sea by local fishermen for a few hours' hand-lining, do not often catch very many whiting, but unlimited numbers of pout and dogfish. The simple reason of this is that the fishermen do not, as a rule, take their customers to the best whiting grounds, which are further out. A stranger to the coast cannot find these places, as they are only discovered by accident, and are well known to the local men by certain marks. which, when found, should always be made a note of. I hardly know of a fish which repays the angler more for using fine tackle than whiting, a fact which professional fishermen appear to be gradually finding out, as many of them now use hooks mounted on gut. As to tackle, the great thing being to get the bait to the bottom, and keep it there, it is obvious that many kinds may be, and are, used. The best for the angler is, undoubtedly, the paternoster; and only when the depth of water is considerable, and the tide so strong that a lead of over alb. becomes essential, should the rod and paternoster be dispensed with in favour of hand-lines. Of these, the best is the Kentish Rig, illustrated in Chapter IV. The paternoster should be of moderately stout gut, and the hooks No. 9 or No. 10, the lowest one placed 6in. above the lead, and two others at distances of 2ft. If handlines are necessary, the hooks should be mounted on at least 2ft. of gut. The ground-bait net should always be used (see page 45). Most commonly the boat is moored; but sometimes it is allowed to drift with the tide, fish being picked up here and there. In hand-line fishing, the lead is dropped to the bottom, and then raised 2ft. if the boat is moored, 3ft. if drifting, so that the baits do not touch the bottom. They should not do this in any case, and, the snooding being 2ft.

to 3ft. long, they are only kept from doing so, when the boat is moored, by the run of the tide. With paternoster tackle the lead, of course, rests on the ground. The best baits are pilchards or their guts, large mussels, herrings, squid, and lugworms. Pilchards and herrings have to be scaled, split down the middle, boned, and the sides cut into short strips, half silver and half blue—i.e., half back and half belly. The size of the hook sufficiently determines the size of the bait. Whiting often afford very good sport at night, and bite particularly well in the early morning.

The Whiting Pout, or Rock Whiting.-If this fish became exterminated, of which there seems no probability. the fishermen of our South Coast watering-places, who make a living by taking excursionists out whiting (?) fishing, would quickly lose their business, for whiting pout and dogfish innumerable are the fish they land for their customers. The pout is a small variety of whiting, which is inferior in many respects, particularly in size and edible qualities. to the silver whiting. It is found over or near rocks not far from the coast, and small ones are caught from pier-heads and in harbours. The tackle, and method of using it, for pout is exactly the same as for the silver whiting; but the hooks (No. 7 or No. 8) and baits should be smaller. Ragworms and small mussels are both good baits; but the pout will take many others, including those named for silver whiting. If nothing better can be obtained, cockles, or the soft part of limpets, may be tried. Many anglers think it an additional attraction to keep raising and lowering the paternoster or hand-line about a foot, the idea being that the movement attracts the fish. A netful of crushed crabs, mussels, and pilchard offal, is far more attractive.

The Wrasse, or Rockfish.—A very beautiful, but very worthless, fish. It abounds all round our coasts, and is easily taken on the paternoster. The hook should be No. 10, or smaller; and for bait, soft crab, mussels, lugworms or ragworms. There are several varieties of rockfish, some more beautiful than others. I have frequently caught them when

pout fishing; and they are usually to be had from pier-heads, and even in harbours, if there are a few rocks scattered about the foundation of the jetty. Wrasse are not often specially fished for.

With these few remarks on wrasse my task comes to an end. It would not have been a difficult matter to fill twice this number of pages with lengthy discourses on Angling in Salt Water, but I have throughout allowed the spirit of condensation to guide my pen, and I venture to hope that the information given is not less than if I had doubled the length of the book.

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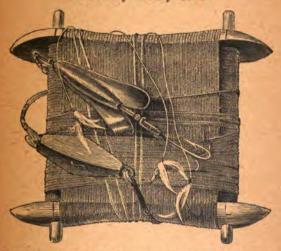
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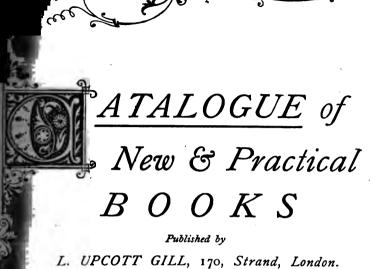
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ears old, and all my friends wonder to see me
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(Mrs.) Maria Worthington.

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Thirsk, Yorks, January 26, 1876.

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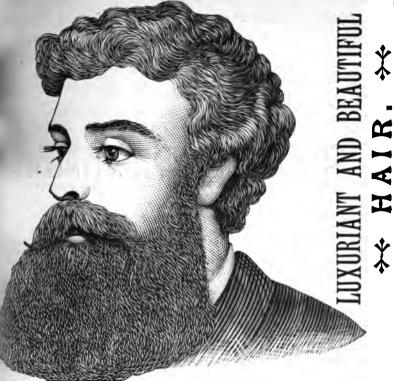
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August 1, 1873.
August 1,

2, Fir.street, Sydenham,
July 15, 1872.
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83, Dewsbury-road, Leeds,
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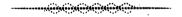
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